NATION

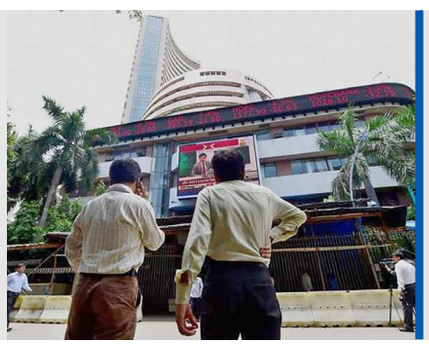
9 get lifer in 2019 Pollachi sexual assault case

≫ Page: 4 ≪

BUSINESS

Markets crash after sharp rally on Indo-Pak truce call

≫ Page: 7 ≪



SPORTS

Alcaraz pulls past Karen to enter QF in Rome

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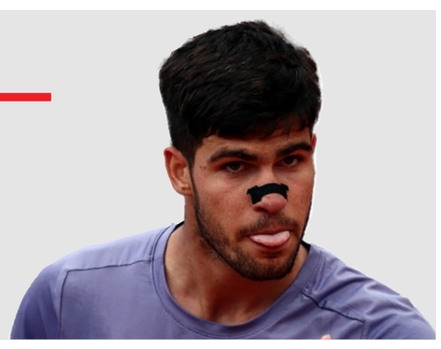

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SALAR

DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

روزنامہ ساحل بنگلور

Website: salarnews.in | www.magzter.com | 14 MAY 2025 | WEDNESDAY | BENGALURU | 15 DHU'L-QI'DAH, 1446 AH | Vol 4 | Issue No 130 | Pages: 8

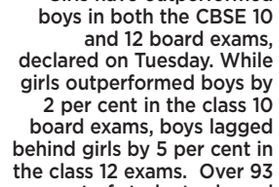

PHOTO: PIXABAY

Retail inflation declines to 6-year low of 3.16%

NEW DELHI, 13 MAY

Retail inflation declined to a nearly 6-year low of 3.16 per cent in April, mainly on account of subdued prices of vegetables, fruits, pulses, and other protein-rich items, and remains within the comfort zone of the Reserve Bank. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) based inflation was 3.34 per cent in March and 4.83 per cent in April 2024. It was 3.15 per cent in July 2019. Food inflation in April was 1.78 per cent, lower than 2.69 per cent in the preceding month and 8.7 per cent in the year-ago month. *—PTI*

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Girls outperform boys in CBSE Class 10, 12 board exams

NEW DELHI, 13 MAY

Girls have outperformed boys in both the CBSE 10 and 12 board exams, declared on Tuesday. While girls outperformed boys by 2 per cent in the class 10 board exams, boys lagged behind girls by 5 per cent in the class 12 exams. Over 93 per cent of students cleared the CBSE class 10 board exams, marginally up from 2024's pass per-centage of 93.60 per cent. While 95 per cent of the girls cleared the exam, it was 92.63 per cent for the boys and 95 per cent for transgender candidates. Over 1.99 lakh candidates have scored above 90 per cent marks, while 45,516 candidates have scored above 95 per cent. 23,71,939 candidates had appeared for the exams.*—PTI*

>>>More on Pages 2 & 4

21 die after drinking spurious liquor in Amritsar

CHANDIGARH/AMRITSAR, 13 MAY

Twenty-one people have died after allegedly consuming spurious liquor in Punjab's Amritsar district. Six people have been hospitalised with complications caused by hooch. The deaths were reported in Bhangali, Patalpuri, Marari Kalan and Therewal villages on 12 May. A prove revealed that methanol was procured in bulk online to prepare the hooch.*—PTI*

>>>More on Page 4

PHOTO: FREEPIK

Centre withdraws blocking of '4PM' YouTube channel

NEW DELHI, 13 MAY

The Supreme Court was on Tuesday informed that an order blocking YouTube channel '4PM', having a subscriber base of 73 lakh, was withdrawn. Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for the petitioner, informed a bench of Justices BR Gavai and Augustine George Masih about the order. The apex court was hearing a plea filed by Sanjay Sharma, editor of digital news platform '4PM', seeking quashing of an order blocking the channel. *—PTI*

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Pak asked for ceasefire after IAF strikes: India

3 terrorists killed in J&K; MEA says PoK only 'outstanding' matter

NEW DELHI, 13 MAY

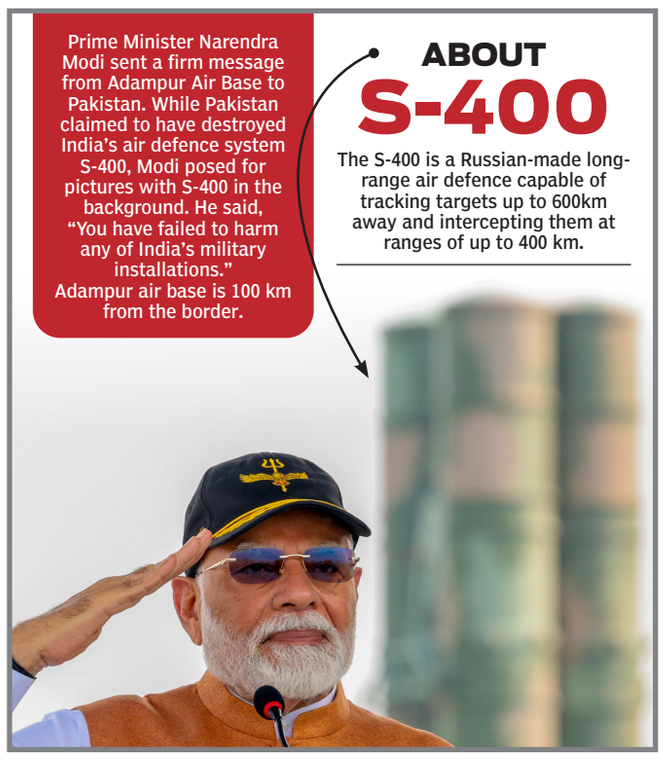
Pakistan proposed a ceasefire and sought Director General of Military Operations (DGMO) talks only after the Indian Air Force's (IAF) precision strikes under Operation Sindoor inflicted significant damage on terror infrastructure and military targets, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Tuesday.

MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal stated the strikes were carried out in response to the 22 April Pahalgam terror attack that killed 26 civilians. He noted that Pakistan's move to de-escalate came "only after effective Indian military action," dismissing claims that foreign intervention prompted the ceasefire.

Jaiswal also rebutted U.S. President Donald Trump's assertion that trade pressure from Washington helped avert a broader conflict. "Trade was never discussed with U.S. officials," Jaiswal clarified, adding that India had conveyed its stance to the American authorities.

Reiterating India's position on Jammu and Kashmir, the MEA reaffirmed that it remains a bilateral issue between India and Pakistan. "The only outstanding matter is the return of Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir (PoK) to India," Jaiswal said.

On Trump's speculation of a possible nuclear standoff, the MEA asserted that India's operations were "entirely within the conventional domain." Jaiswal pointed out that Pakistan's own foreign minister had ruled out any nuclear involvement.


ABOUT
S-400
The S-400 is a Russian-made long-range air defence capable of tracking targets up to 600km away and intercepting them at ranges of up to 400 km.
Prime Minister Narendra Modi sent a firm message from Adampur Air Base to Pakistan. While Pakistan claimed to have destroyed India's air defence system S-400, Modi posed for pictures with S-400 in the background. He said, "You have failed to harm any of India's military installations." Adampur air base is 100 km from the border.

India has also taken note of defence hardware supplied to Pakistan by China and Turkey during the escalation, with the Defence Ministry evaluating its effectiveness in countering Indian operations.

Meanwhile, in south Kashmir's Shopian district, top Lashkar-e-Taiba commander Shahid Kuttay and two other terrorists were killed in an encounter. Kuttay was a key figure behind several attacks, including the killing of a BJP sarpanch last year.

Separately, Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the armed forces from Adampur Air Base near the Pakistan border on Tuesday. Standing before an operational S-400 missile defence system, Modi declared that Pakistan had failed to harm any Indian military installation. "If terrorism continues from your soil, you will face complete annihilation," he warned.

"Pakistan has nurtured terrorism on an industrial scale," Jaiswal said, adding that the terror camps destroyed in Operation Sindoor were linked to global attacks, not just those in India. A top officer of the Indian military briefed defence attaches or their representatives from a large number of countries on the "successful conduct" of Operation Sindoor which it said has set "new normals in India-Pakistan relations". India also expelled a staffer of the Pakistan high commission and declared 'persona non grata': MEA for his alleged links with two people from Punjab who were arrested in espionage. *—PTI*

>>>More on Pages 2 & 3

India proposes retaliatory tariffs against US

BENGALURU, 13 MAY

India has proposed to levy increased tariffs on some US products in response to US President Donald Trump's duties, especially on steel and aluminium.

This development came as India and US are ready to finalise a trade deal, with Delhi offering to cut its tariff gap with US by two-thirds.

News agencies Bloomberg and Reuters cited a document submitted to the World Trade Organisation that said that the proposed suspension of concessions or other obligations will result in increased tariffs on certain US goods.

However, India's move can overshadow its negotiation with the US.

The US imposed 25 per cent levies on steel and aluminium imports, while threatening 26 per cent reciprocal tariffs on Indian goods, thereby affecting $7.6 billion worth of such products imported by the US.

India also imposed 12 per cent temporary tariffs to curb imports of cheap steel, primarily from China, though pushing for its steel products' export to partner nations.

Meanwhile, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal accompanied by senior Indian officials will visit Washington from 17 to 20 May for key discussions on a proposed bilateral trade agreement with the US.

Goyal will meet US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer and Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick, focusing on achieving "early mutual wins." Negotiations will cover market access, rules of origin, non-tariff barriers and India's proposal for retaliatory duties. *—Salar News*

Belagavi boy kills friend over a packet of chips

BELAGAVI, 13 MAY

A 12-year-old boy stabbed his 15-year-old friend over a packet of chips in Hubballi on Monday night. The attack occurred around 7.30 pm in Gurusiddeshwar Nagar near Murusavira Mutt, police confirmed.

Hubballi-Dharwad Police Commissioner N Shashikumar stated that the accused, who had completed Grade 5, stabbed Chetan Somashekhar Rakkasagi in the stomach with a knife. Both boys lived in the same locality.

"The victim, Chetan, was the only son of his parents, who earn their livelihood by selling roti and chapati," said Commissioner Shashikumar.

Kamaripeth Station Inspector MB Holi reported that the incident stemmed from a petty quarrel over buying a packet of chips. After the dispute, the accused allegedly returned home, took a knife, and stabbed Chetan in the lower abdomen with such force that his intestines were exposed.

- After the dispute, the accused allegedly returned home, took a knife, and stabbed Chetan in the lower abdomen with such force that his intestines were exposed.

Chetan's mother rushed him to Karnataka Institute of Medical Sciences (KIMS), where doctors declared him brought dead.

"This is one of the most shocking cases I've encountered in my policing career," Commissioner Shashikumar remarked.

"The entire police force is stunned. I urge parents to closely monitor their children's behaviour and social circles to prevent such tragedies."

A case has been registered under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. *—Salar News*

CJI to not take up any post after retirement

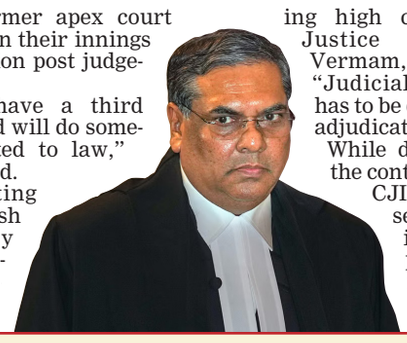
NEW DELHI, 13 MAY

Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna on Tuesday said though he wasn't going to accept any post-retirement official assignments, he would continue his innings in law.

Justice Khanna, who was elevated to the top court in January, 2019 and appointed as CJI in November, 2024 and would be retired onTuesday.

Many former apex court judges begin their innings in arbitration post judgeship.

"I will have a third innings and will do something related to law," Khanna said.



Commenting on the cash discovery controversy involving high court judge Justice Yashwant Vermam, he said, "Judicial thinking has to be decisive and adjudicatory."

While dealing with the controversy, the CJI dealt took several steps, including a preliminary inquiry by Delhi High Court, judicial work being taken away from Justice Varma and later his transfer to the Allahabad High Court. After the in-house inquiry panel indicted the judge, the CJI nudged him to resign and later wrote to President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi after Varma refused to tender resignation. *—PTI*

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SAUDI, TRUMP SIGN $600B DEAL

US President Donald Trump and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman Al Saud signed over a dozen bilateral agreements in Riyadh on Tuesday, marking the start of Trump's four-day Middle East visit. The deals include a $142 billion defence sales agreement, part of a broader $600 billion Saudi investment commitment in the US. The defence deal includes arms, military systems and services. In addition to the defence package, the agreement includes other commercial deals. Trump also hinted at an even larger target, saying, "One trillion dollars would be even better"

>>>More on Page 6

- Trump says he hopes Saudi Arabia will soon join the Abraham Accords and recognise Israel 'in their own time'
- Trump says he will remove sanctions on Syria.
- Trump urges Iran toward a 'new and a better path' as he pushes for nuclear deal.
- Trump says he wants to "stop" the Ukraine war and US' Marco Rubio will head to Istanbul for talks between Russia and Ukraine on 15 May.

HIGHEST IN 12 YRS

India saw 54 lakh displacements due to disasters in 2024: Report

NEW DELHI, 13 MAY

India recorded 54 lakh displacements in 2024 due to floods, storms and other disasters, the highest in 12 years, a report by the Geneva-based Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) said on Tuesday.

The report said that the country recorded 1,700 displacements associated with violence.

Violent incidents in Manipur, including burning of homes, triggered 1,000 movements.

Two-thirds of the internal displacements in India were triggered by floods.

Climate change, deforestation, erosion and the lack of maintenance of dams and embankments were some of the main drivers of risk.

Assam saw 25 lakh internal displacements in 2024 due to the most intense floods in over a decade.

Assam saw **25 LAKH** internal displacements in 2024 due to the most intense floods in over a decade.

Storms triggered 16 lakh displacements in the country.

Over a lakh displacements were associated with cyclone Dana, which formed in the Bay of Bengal in late October and forced people to flee in Odisha and West Bengal.

West Bengal also saw 2,08,000 displacements due to the cyclone in the Bay of Bengal in May, 2024.

It caused the Brahmaputra river and its tributaries to overflow, triggering about 3,38,000 displacements in Assam.

Heavy rains in Tripura in 2024 caused landslides in more than 2,000 locations in mid-August, triggering 3,15,000 displacements. Roads were blocked, hampering the delivery of aid. *—PTI*

Monsoon reaches south Bay of Bengal, Nicobar Islands

NEW DELHI, 13 MAY

The southwest monsoon advanced into parts of the South Bay of Bengal, south Andaman Sea, Nicobar Islands and some areas of the north Andaman Sea on Tuesday.

Moderate to heavy rainfall lashed Nicobar Islands in the past two days.

The strength and depth of westerly winds over the south Bay of Bengal, Nicobar Islands and Andaman Sea increased at this period, with wind speeds exceeding 20 knots at 1.5km above sea level and extending up to 4.5km in some areas.

Cloudiness also decreased over the region.

Weathermen said conditions are favourable for the monsoon to advance further into more parts of the south Arabian Sea, Maldives and Comorin area, more areas of the south Bay of Bengal, the entire Andaman and Nicobar Islands, remaining parts of the Andaman Sea and parts of the central Bay of Bengal over the next three to four days.

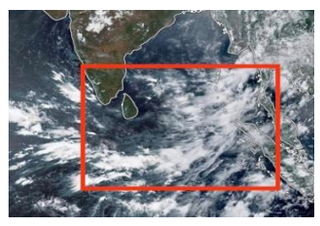

PHOTO: PTI

The primary rain bearing system is likely to reach Kerala on 27 May, making it the earliest onset of monsoon over mainland India since 2009.

The Indian Meteorological Department had forecast above-normal cumulative rainfall in this monsoon, ruling out the possibility of El Niño conditions associated with below-normal rainfall. *—PTI*

Russia downed MH17 over Ukraine in 2014: ICAO

MELBOURNE, 13 MAY

The Council of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) on Tuesday found Russia responsible for shooting down Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 over Ukraine with the loss of 298 lives more than a decade ago, in a ruling that raises the prospect of victims' families being paid compensation.

A Dutch-led international investigation concluded in 2016 that the Amsterdam-to-Kuala Lumpur airliner was shot down on July 17, 2014 from Ukrainian territory held by separatist rebels using a Buk missile system delivered from Russia. Moscow denies any involvement in the MH17 tragedy. The Netherlands and Australian governments brought the case against ICAO in 2022 as Russia doesn't recognise the International Court of Justice. *—PTI*

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Legislators' pay tribute to writer RK Narayan

BENGALURU, 13 MAY

Karnataka's elected representatives took to 'X' to remember literature RK Narayan, known for his seminal works like 'Malgudi Days' and 'The Guide', on his 24th death anniversary on Tuesday. "...his stories showed us that simplicity holds depth, and ordinary lives carry extraordinary meaning," wrote Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar. Assembly Speaker UT Khader said, "His characters, simple yet profound, continue to live in the hearts of readers, offering a mirror to our everyday lives with warmth, wit, and gentle irony." BJP legislator Byrathi Basavaraja said he was "the foremost among Indian English writers", too. MLA K Gopalaiah said, "... the master storyteller brought 'Malgudi' to life and made Indian English literature truly our own." MLAs Araga Jnanendra and Munirathna also joined them. *—PTI*

City firm launches system for easier maths learning

BENGALURU, 13 MAY

A Department of Scientific and Industrial Research-recognised institution in Bengaluru has launched a new system of mathematics learning called Dhatu. Vallish Herur, Managing Trustee of Prayoga, said the platform aims to make maths less intimidating and more accessible for students. "The way mathematics is presented has two challenges. One, students are told that math is all about solving problems. Two, the concepts underlying the problem are not explained well to the students. If we tackle these, we make learning maths ewasy," said Herur. To tackle these issues, Prayoga collaborated with Stanford University Professor of Computer Science Prof Jeffrey Ullman to develop comprehensive mathematics learning modules for students in grades 9–12, based on the NCERT curriculum, he added *—PTI*

Nine injured as bus carrying workers overturns near KIA

BENGALURU, 13 MAY

A private bus carrying construction workers turned turtle near Begur junction on the Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) Road on Tuesday afternoon, leaving one person critically injured and at least eight others with varying degrees of injuries. Police said, the accident took place between 12.45pm and 1pm when the bus (registration number KA 03 C 3642), carrying 35 employees of Ashoka Buildcon Limited, hit a road divider and overturned. The bus was heading towards the city from the airport when the mishap occurred near the first signal after the KIAL circle, the police said. The workers were part of a team constructing the Western Crossfield Taxiway at the airport. They were reportedly en route to their paying guest accommodation in Kadayarapanahalli near Hunachur for lunch. Police are investigating the cause of the accident and have, so far, not ruled out speeding or driver negligence. Further details are awaited. *—Salar News*

Oppn to challenge Trump claims on truce: Kharge

Cong chief skirts question on PM 'bowing to US pressure'

KALABURAGI, 13 MAY

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge on Tuesday said the opposition will question the Union government at the all-party meeting, regarding US President Donald Trump's claims that his administration helped broker a ceasefire between India and Pakistan.

The Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha said he will urge the government to call an all-party meeting soon, to discuss the latest developments between India and Pakistan.

He said, "Trump is saying things to claim credit. These people (PM and the Centre) are saying no. It is a sensitive matter. When an all-party meeting is called, we will discuss these things".

On claims that PM Modi gave in to Trump's mediation, he said "It won't be right for me to speak about it now. We have our party meeting. I'm going for that. I will ask (Centre) to call an all-party meeting, let's see what they will do."

India and Pakistan reached an understanding on Saturday to end the military conflict after four days of intense cross-border drone and missile strikes. Sources have been maintaining that the Director Generals of Military Operations of India and Pakistan reached an understanding to stop all firings and military actions, and no third party was involved.

There was no reference to trade in talks between top leaders of India and the US during the India-Pakistan military conflict, government sources said on Monday after American President Donald Trump claimed that he pressured New Delhi and Islamabad to stop hostilities by threatening to cut trade with both countries. *—PTI*

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge *PHOTO: ANI*

- Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge on Tuesday said the opposition will question the Union government at the all-party meeting, regarding US President Donald Trump's claims that his administration helped broker a ceasefire between India and Pakistan

BJP plans Tiranga Yatra to honour forces

BENGALURU, 13 MAY

Leader of Opposition R Ashoka on Tuesday urged the people to participate in the Tiranga Yatra, part of a one-week state-wide non-political campaign in support of the Operation Sindoor, which will be held in Bengaluru on 15 May.

"To show our support to Operation Sindoor and armed forces, we will be holding Tiranga Yatra across the state of Karnataka. In Bengaluru, we will be holding the Yatra on 15 May and in the rest of the places in Karnataka, one week after that. This is non-political, all people should participate in this," Ashoka said.

The campaign will be carried out by BJP across the country from 13 to 23 May, said sources. *—ANI*

Karnataka beats national average, with Class 10 students achieving 98.9 per cent pass and Class 12 students 95.95 per cent *PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD*

K'taka girls place State among top scorers in CBSE

BENGALURU, 13 MAY

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) declared the results for Class 10 and Class 12 examinations on Tuesday, with Karnataka emerging as one of the top-performing states in the country. Nationally, the overall pass percentage stood at 93.66 per cent for Class 10 and 88.39 per cent for Class 12.

Karnataka outperformed the national average, with Class 10 students achieving 98.9 per cent pass and Class 12 students 95.95 per cent.

Bengaluru, under the CBSE's regional division, ranked third in Class 10 results and fourth in Class 12, placing it firmly among the top regions nationally. Vijayawada and Thiruvananthapuram retained the top positions in both categories.

Girls outshone boys across the board. In Class 10, 95 per cent of girls passed compared to 92.63 per cent of boys. For Class 12, girls achieved a pass rate of 91.64 per cent, while boys stood at 85.7 per cent.

The exams were held from 15 February to 18 March for Class 10, and until 4 April for Class 12. In Karnataka, Class 12 exams were conducted across 180 centres, and Class 10 across 323 centres.

Students can access their results at cbseresults.nic.in or via DigiLocker using their roll number, school number, and admit card ID. *—Salar News*

BOLT OF RELIEF

A sudden spell of rain took Bengaloreans by surprise on Tuesday. The downpour brought much-needed relief from the sweltering summer heat and rising humidity levels. *PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD*

Massive fire guts City oil godown

BENGALURU, 13 MAY

A massive fire broke out early Tuesday morning at an oil storage godown leased to Shell Oil and Gas Company in Adakamaranahalli on the outskirts of the city, destroying Rs 30 crore worth oil stocks.

Officials said the fire, suspected to have been triggered by a short circuit, gutted a 33,000 sq ft facility owned by a person Krishnappa, son-in-law of former minister HC Srikantaiah, and had been rented out to Shell.

Locals said, the blaze was first noticed around 3am at the facility, and within minutes, the fire engulfed the entire godown where large quantities of oil were stockpiled in anticipation of supply disruptions due to the on-going tensions between India and Pakistan.

The fire in the large godown triggered panic in the area, as the oil fed red blaze spread and thick smoke billowed into the morning summer sky. Locals feared that the conflagration would spread across the town.

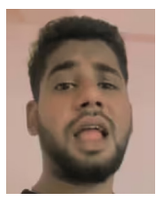
The scale of the fire triggered a multi-agency response and more than 80 personnel and 12 fire tenders from Nelamangala, Peenya, and Yeshwanthpur rushed to the spot to tackle the inferno. It took 10 hours for the firefighters to completely douse the raging fire. Fortunately, no casualties were reported. The Madanayakanahalli police have registered a case and further investigation is underway to ascertain the exact cause of fire and also to determine the extent of loss due to the incident. *—Salar News*

Firefighters walk past the oil warehouse where more than Rs 30 crore worth of goods were gutted in a fire at Adakamaranahalli near Nelamangala, in the outskirts of Bengaluru, on Tuesday *PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD*

City man held for 'provocative' post against PM on social media

BENGALURU, 13 MAY

A 25-year-old electrician was arrested in the city for allegedly posting a "provocative video" on social media, targeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The Bandepalya police took suo motu cognisance after the video went viral and booked the accused under various sections of the Information Technology Act and the Indian Penal Code.



The accused, identified as Nawaz, a resident of Mangammanapalya, had uploaded the video using a social media account under the handle "Public Servant." In the video, Nawaz allegedly criticised the Prime Minister for escalating tensions with Pakistan and questioned why a bomb had not been dropped on the PM's residence.

Police said Nawaz's video incited hatred and could potentially disturb communal harmony. He has been remanded to judicial custody and sent to the Bengaluru Central Jail.

The incident comes close on the heels of another similar case in Mangaluru, where police booked a postgraduate student Reshma N Bariga from Belalu near Belthangady, for allegedly posting a message on Instagram, criticising Operation Sindhoor and Indian armed forces' strike on Pakistan's territory.

Konaje police have registered a separate case and are investigating. *—Salar News*

₹3,200-crore AP liquor scam accused arrested in Mysuru

AMARAVATI, 13 MAY

A Special Investigation Team (SIT) from Andhra Pradesh probing a Rs 3,200 crore liquor scam has arrested an accused in the case from Mysuru on Tuesday.

Balaji Govindappa is an executive director at Bharati Cement Pvt Ltd.

According to a source, SIT officials searched Govindappa's residence in Hyderabad three days ago, which was followed by his arrest today.

Recently, the Enforcement Directorate filed a money laundering case with regard to the alleged liquor scam. The case stems from a September 2024 FIR of the Economic Offences CID of the state police.

In the recent remand report of Kasireddy Raja Sekhar Reddy, the prime accused in the alleged liquor scam, the SIT has named several people who allegedly played key roles between 2019 and 2024. *—PTI*

Alt News's Zubair claims threat to life

BENGALURU, 13 MAY

Fact-checking website Alt News co-founder Mohammad Zubair said that he has filed a police complaint following a threat after his home address and mobile number were allegedly leaked on a social media platform.

In a post on X on Monday night, he alleged that some people have leaked his home address and mobile number and have threatened to send pork to his address.

"I have filed a complaint before @DCPEASTBCP (DCP East). Trust that @CPBlr @DgpKarnataka takes this threat seriously at least this time," Zubair posted. *—PTI*

2 held for robbing foreign national at knife-point

BENGALURU, 13 MAY

Two men, including an autorickshaw driver, have been arrested for allegedly robbing a foreign national at knife-point in Bhadrappa Layout. The incident occurred on 9 May, when the foreign national residing in Bhadrappa Layout was riding his two-wheeler towards Ring Road. Near the Reliance Smart Bazaar, he was stopped by the duo who allegedly threatened him with a knife. The duo fled with the foreigner's two-wheeler and a bag containing important documents such as his passport, Rs 1.15 lakh cash and other valuables. The total estimated loss was around Rs 1.6 lakh. *—Salar News*

CATCH'EM YOUNG

BBMP launches climate action clubs

BENGALURU, 13 MAY

The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) Climate Action Cell (CAC) has announced the launch of the Bengaluru Climate Action Club programme, aimed at involving schools in meaningful climate initiatives across the city.

This initiative seeks to transform students into climate-aware citizens by combining climate education with practical, community-based action. According to the BBMP, the clubs will nurture leadership and advocacy skills in young people while encouraging them to contribute actively to local environmental solutions. Launched with the support of Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, the programme invites all government, aided, and private schools in Bengaluru to participate.

The goal is to enrol 100 schools within the first month, eventually expanding to include over 6,000 institutions.

To incentivise early participation, the first few schools that register will be recognised and awarded by the Deputy Chief Minister on World Environment Day, 5 June, 2025.

The BBMP emphasises that the programme is not just about raising awareness but about empowering students to take real, on-the-ground action in their communities. By fostering grassroots involvement, the initiative aims to connect classroom learning with real-world impact, promoting sustainability from the ground up. *—PTI*

A poster of the BBMP Climate Action Cell *PHOTO: X*

Driver held after fleeing with employer's ₹1.51 cr

BENGALURU, 13 MAY

A car driver who allegedly fled with Rs 1.51 crore of his employer's money was arrested by City police after a brief disappearance, during which he went on a temple-hopping tour with his wife.

The accused, 45-year-old Rajesh from Andhra Pradesh, had been working for over 10 years with a chartered accountant based in Kodandarampura, Malleswaram. He had earned his employer's complete trust over the years.

According to police, Rajesh was given Rs 1.51 crore in cash to deposit in a bank.

However, instead of completing the task, he fled with the money. Investigations revealed that he hid Rs 1.48 crore in his house and took Rs 3 lakh to go on a pilgrimage with his wife.

The theft came to light when the employer visited the bank and realised the money hadn't arrived. After several failed attempts to reach Rajesh by phone, a complaint was filed at the Vyalikaval Police Station. *—Salar News*

PM SENDS 'LAKSHMAN REKHA' MSG TO PAK

Modi visited the Adampur air base in Punjab, which Pakistan had claimed to have destroyed

Prime Minister Narendra Modi meets armed forces personnel at the Adampur air base in Punjab **PHOTO: PTI**

NEW DELHI, 13 MAY

In a powerful message from the frontlines, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday lauded the Indian armed forces for their role in 'Operation Sindoor', asserting that the four-day operation drew a definitive 'Lakshman Rekha' for Pakistan.

Speaking from the Adampur Air Force Base in Punjab, just 100 km from the Pakistan border, Modi praised the military's precision strikes that reportedly destroyed nine terror sites and damaged eight Pakistani military installations. "Aapne jo kiya wo abhutpurva, akalpniya aur adbhut hai (What you have achieved is unprecedented, unimaginable, and amazing)," the Prime Minister said in his 27-minute address — his first to the armed forces since the operation.

Pakistan had earlier claimed to have destroyed the Adampur base and India's S-400 systems. Modi's surprise visit and televised address, with an operational S-400 missile launcher in the backdrop, rebutted those claims emphatically.

Wearing a Western Air Command cap with the trishul insignia, Modi interacted with airmen who welcomed him with chants of 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai'. "This slogan is not just a chant — it is a soldier's pledge," Modi said. "When our drones and missiles strike, it's the voice of the nation speaking through them."

He emphasised that India's decisive action had "taken the wind out of nuclear blackmail," warning terrorism's patrons that any hostile intent toward India would invite destruction.

Adampur, India's second-largest air base, is home to Rafale and MiG-29 squadrons and played a key role in the 1965 and 1971 wars.

Pakistan's foreign ministry, reacting to Modi's address, said the country "remains committed to the recent ceasefire understanding, taking necessary steps towards de-escalation, regional stability," according to Reuters.

Pakistan also said Indian actions set a "dangerous precedent for aggression, dragging the entire region to the brink of disaster". *—PTI*

Ranveer slams Pak terror links on Piers Morgan

YouTuber Ranveer Allahbadia, aka BeerBiceps, made headlines at Piers Morgan 'Uncensored'. Holding photos of Osama bin Laden and Lashkar-e-Taiba commander Hafiz Abdul Rauf, he said, "This is the narrative the world should know." Responding to criticism over a deleted post to "Pakistani brothers," he said Pakistan's institutions—not its people—promote extremism. The show also featured journalist Barkha Dutt, former Pakistan Foreign Minister Hina Rabbani Khar, and Pakistani commentator Shehzad Ghias Shaikh. Hina left the show while Dutt was questioning her.

Confidential war book guides armed forces

A limited-edition, blue-covered Union War Book 2010, over 200 pages long and classified, has become the go-to manual for bureaucrats during the recent armed conflict. Updated annually, it outlines emergency protocols for ministries and state chief secretaries, from evacuations to sirens. Rooted in colonial-era traditions, a new edition is issued every 15 years. The current version was compiled post-26/11 attacks. While its contents remain secret, it's being actively referenced. Only key bureaucrats hold copies; even its rightful custodians are unclear.

Congress shuns BJP's Goa nuke plant proposal

Congress firmly opposed the Centre's proposal to consider a nuclear power plant in Goa, asserting that the state is not a "laboratory for BJP's dangerous experiments". Union Minister Manohar Lal Khattar had suggested the feasibility discussions. Goa Pradesh Congress Committee president Amit Patkar cited concerns for the environment and public safety. Aam Aadmi Party's state unit president Amit Palekar also questioned the necessity of a new plant, pointing to the existing facility in Kaiga, Karnataka, and pledging to resist any harmful initiatives. *—PTI*

Pak hackers attacked 15L Indian websites

MUMBAI, 13 MAY

Following the recent terror strike in Pahalgam, over 1.5 million cyber attacks were launched against critical Indian infrastructure by seven Advanced Persistent Threat (APT) groups, according to Maharashtra Cyber officials. Only 150 of these attacks were successful.

Despite a mutual understanding between India and Pakistan to cease hostilities, government websites continue to face cyber offensives from Pakistan, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Morocco, and parts of the Middle East.

The state cyber agency released a report titled "Road of Sindoor", detailing the cyber warfare linked to Pakistan-allied groups. The report, shared with national security agencies, follows an earlier document, "Echoes of Pahalgam".

PHOTO: AI-GENERATED

The identified APT groups include Pakistan-based APT 36, Pakistan Cyber Force, Team Insane PK, Mysterious Bangladesh, Indo Hacks Sec, Cyber Group HOAX 1337, and National Cyber Crew.

The attackers used malware campaigns, DDoS attacks, GPS spoofing, and website defacements. Successful breaches included the Kulgaon-Badlapur Municipal Council and the Defence Nursing College in Jalandhar. Hackers also claimed to have accessed data from Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport and telecom firms, with some data allegedly appearing on the dark web.

Over 5,000 fake news items and 80 major misinformation campaigns were identified, including false claims of blackouts and system hacks. Authorities urge the public to verify information through official sources. *—PTI*

Students arrive at a school as educational institutions reopen in non-border districts of Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday **PHOTO: PTI**

11 Pakistani soldiers killed

ISLAMABAD/BEIJING, 13 MAY

Pakistan on Tuesday confirmed that 11 military personnel, including a squadron leader, were killed and 78 others injured during recent military clashes with India. The Pakistan military also claimed that 40 civilians lost their lives and 121 were injured in what it termed "unprovoked and reprehensible" attacks by India on the night of 6–7 May.

India launched 'Operation Sindoor' on 7 May, conducting precision strikes on terror infrastructure in response to the 22 April Pahalgam terror attack, which claimed 26 lives. Pakistan responded with attempted attacks on Indian military bases between 8 and 10 May. The four-day confrontation ended on Saturday following an understanding between the two nations.

Among the Pakistani Air Force casualties were Squadron Leader Usman Yousuf and four other technicians. Army personnel, including Naik Abdul Rehman and Sepoy Muhammad Adeel Akbar, were also confirmed dead. The military said it responded with 'Operation Bunyanum Marsoos', a retaliatory campaign under the banner of 'Marka-e-Haq'.

Meanwhile, Chinese Foreign Ministry official Liu Jinsong met Indian Ambassador to China Pradeep Kumar Rawat in Beijing on Monday. The two discussed bilateral ties and regional issues. China expressed its support for the ceasefire and urged both India and Pakistan to maintain calm, resolve disputes through dialogue, and avoid further escalation.

"China stands ready to play a constructive role in ensuring a full and lasting ceasefire," said Liu, Director General of the Department of Asian Affairs. —PTI

PUNJAB WOMAN INJURED DURING PAK ATTACK DIES

LUDHIANA, 13 MAY

A 50-year-old woman, Sukhwinder Kaur, who suffered severe burns during a Pakistani aerial incursion in Punjab's Ferozepur last week, died in a hospital on Tuesday. Debris from the strike fell on her home in Khai Pheme Ke village, igniting the house and a car. Her husband, Lakhwinder Singh, 55, and son, Monu Singh, 24, remain hospitalised. Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann announced Rs 5,000 ex gratia for the family, while MP Sanjeev Arora pledged an additional Rs 2,000. The incident was among several attacks along India's western border. *—PTI*

FAREWELL BRAVE SOLDIER

A family member of BSF constable Deepak Chingakham (inset), who was martyred in the line of duty, mourns as his mortal remains are taken to his hometown, in Imphal, Tuesday **PHOTO: PTI**

5 BORDER DISTRICTS SHUT SCHOOLS

CHANDIGARH, 13 MAY

Schools in five border districts of Punjab remained closed on Tuesday, while blackouts were enforced in Amritsar and parts of Hoshiarpur, including Dasuya and Mukerian, on Monday night as a precautionary measure, officials said. Colleges and universities were also shut in Pathankot and Amritsar. However, the Amritsar district administration stated that higher education institutions could continue with online classes. *—PTI*

POSTERS ON TERRORISTS CROP UP

Posters have appeared across Shopian district in Jammu and Kashmir, offering a reward of Rs 20 lakh for information on three Pakistani terrorists linked to the 22 April, Pahalgam attack that killed 26 people. Written in Urdu, the posters feature the suspects' photographs and urge locals to help, stating those who kill innocents have no place in the country. The wanted men — Asif Fauji, Suleman Shah, and Abu Talha — were also involved in previous terror activities in Poonch, officials said. *—PTI*

3 ARRESTED ON TREASON CHARGES

GUWAHATI, 13 MAY

Three more individuals were arrested in Assam on treason charges, bringing the total number of arrests to 56 since the Pahalgam attack. The arrested men—Lalchan Ali from Dhubri, Samir Ali from Lakhimpur, and Rakib Hussain from Karbi Anglong—were accused of sympathising with the enemy. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma condemned such acts as treason. *—PTI*

Delhi court grants bail to TMC leaders for 2024 ECI protest

NEW DELHI, 13 MAY

Delhi court has granted bail to 10 Trinamool Congress (TMC) leaders, including Derek O'Brien, Sagarika Ghose, and Saket Gokhale, after they were arrested for a protest in front of Election Commission of India in April last year. Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate, Neha Mittal, approved the bail request for the leaders, who had gathered outside prohibitory order in place. While nine leaders attended the hearing in person, Vivek Gupta participated via video conferencing. Bail was granted on personal bonds of Rs 10,000 for five sitting MPs and similar arrangements for the others. Court noted the chargesheet was filed without accused being arrested and scheduled further hearings for 21 May. TMC leaders had protested against alleged targeting by central probe agencies, demanding changes in leadership. *—PTI*

Sofiya is terrorist's sister: Minister

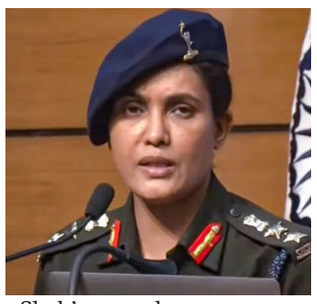
NEW DELHI, 13 MAY

Madhya Pradesh Minister of Tribal Affairs Kunwar Vijay Shah started a political row by making offensive comments on **Colonel Sofiya Qureshi**.

Qureshi, who had emerged as one of the most prominent faces of the media for her briefings during the launch of Operation Sindoor, was called "sister of Pakistani terrorists" by Shah.

A viral video, which was shared by Congress, showed Shah speaking at an event in Mhow, where many prominent BJP leaders were also present. In the video, he said, "Jinhone humari betiyon ke sindoor ujade the... humne unhiki behen bhej kar ke unki aisi ki taisi karwayi (Those who wiped the vermilion off our daughters' forehead... we sent their sister to teach them a lesson).

He went on saying, "They undressed Hindus and killed them, and Modi ji sent their sister to return the favour. Since Modi ji could not remove their clothes, he sent a sister of their community to send the message that if you make the sisters of our community widows, a sister of your community will strip you naked."



Shah's remarks were severely criticised by Congress.

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge considered his statement as an insult to the Indian Armed Forces and urged the BJP to sack Shah immediately.

The BJP leader , after receiving a huge backlash online, told news agency PTI, "We respect the actions taken by the Indian forces that avenged the Pahalgam terror attack in which the vermilion was wiped off the forehead of our sisters. I don't want to say anything to those who are twisting my remarks."

He also added, "She (Qureshi) is a sister who has enhanced our prestige; it should not be seen in any other context. We respect her and will continue to do so." *—Agencies*

M'RASHTRA SECRETARIAT GETS BOMB THREAT

MUMBAI, 13 MAY

An anonymous email warning of a bomb blast was sent to the Mantralaya, the administrative headquarters of the Maharashtra government, on Monday evening.

The email was received by an official from the Disaster Management Control Room, stating that a blast would occur within 48 hours, although no specific location was mentioned.

In response, police conducted a thorough search of the complex but found no suspicious items. Given the heightened tensions amidst the ongoing India-Pakistan military conflict, Mumbai Police have increased security measures across prominent locations in the city. *—PTI*

990 MILLION VOTERS

Duplicate voter card number resolved: EC sources

NEW DELHI, 13 MAY

The Election Commission of India has addressed the issue of electoral photo identity cards (EPIC) possessing duplicate numbers. Sources revealed on Tuesday that new voter cards with unique numbers have been issued to individuals affected by the duplication.

The occurrence of similar EPIC numbers was reported to be relatively minor, averaging roughly one in every four polling stations. During verification efforts in the field, it was confirmed that the holders of these duplicate EPICs were legitimate voters, albeit registered across different assembly constituencies and polling stations.

The move comes in response to allegations of voter list irregularities by opposition parties, including the Trinamool Congress (TMC). In March, the Election Commission committed to resolving this long-standing issue within three months.

To tackle the problem, the Commission undertook an exhaustive review of the entire electoral database, encompassing over 990 million voters. This extensive search involved chief electoral officers from all 36 states and Union territories, along with electoral registration officers from 4,123 assembly constituencies nationwide, covering around 10.5 lakh (1.05 million) polling stations.

Each polling station typically accommodates approximately 1,000 voters **PHOTO: PTI**

- The move comes in response to allegations of voter list irregularities by opposition parties, including the Trinamool Congress (TMC).

Each polling station typically accommodates approximately 1,000 voters. The swift action taken by the Election Commission underscores its commitment to ensuring the integrity of the electoral process in India. *—PTI*

Bomb scare on Mumbai-bound plane at Kolkata

KOLKATA, 13 MAY

An Indigo plane was taken to the isolation bay at the Kolkata airport on Tuesday afternoon for a thorough security check after a passenger was suspected of carrying a .The passenger, 26, was detained after he told the airline's security officer that he had a bomb. The passenger, travelling to Mumbai from Imphal with a stopover in Kolkata, made the comment during the step ladder point check just before boarding. Soon security was beefed up and standard operating procedure implemented. Of the 186 passengers taking the flight to Mumbai from Kolkata, 179 had already boarded. The flight was supposed to depart for Mumbai at 1.30 pm, but was delayed. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Six youths arrested in Jharkhand for raping girl

GUMLA, 13 MAY

In a harrowing incident, a girl was allegedly raped by six young men in Gumla district, Jharkhand. The attack occurred while the victim was attending a wedding and stepped outside with three other girls. While her companions managed to escape, the girl was accosted and taken to a nearby forest where she was raped. The assailants left her abandoned. After being discovered by her family, she recounted the events, prompting her father to file a police report. The assault occurred last Friday, and by Monday, authorities arrested all six suspects, aged between 18 and 24, from various locations. Mukesh Tudu, the Sursang police station officer, indicated that a swift response team was mobilised, and the accused have now been placed in judicial remand following their confessions. A medical examination of the victim was conducted as part of the investigation. *—PTI*

Indian couple dies in road accident in Philippines

PALGHAR, 13 MAY

A couple from Vasai, Maharashtra, tragically lost their lives in a road accident while holidaying in the Philippines. Gerald Pereira (50) and his wife Priya (46) were riding a two-wheeler in Badian on 10 May when they collided with a truck and subsequently crashed into an electric pole. Priya died instantly at the scene, while Gerald sustained grave injuries and succumbed during treatment in a local hospital. The couple, who lived in the Sandor area of Vasai, leave behind a teenage daughter and son. Church authorities from St Thomas Church in Vasai confirmed the details and noted that arrangements for repatriating their remains are still pending. The community mourns the loss of the couple. *—PTI*

Police recover suspected bombs in Kerala's Kannur

KANNUR, 13 MAY

Police in Kannur recovered two suspected steel bombs from private land in Muliyathode near Panur on Tuesday. This discovery occurred in the same area where a fatal explosion linked to the manufacturing of illicit explosives took place last year, resulting in one death and serious injuries to another individual. The landowner reported the suspected devices after his brother spotted them while harvesting coconuts. The bomb squad was promptly dispatched to the site. Footage from a local television channel showed bomb squad personnel carefully placing the small steel containers into a bucket filled with sand for safe removal and inspection. Authorities have deployed bomb and dog squads to the vicinity as a precaution. *—PTI*

9 get lifer in '19 Pollachi sexual assault case

Charges include criminal conspiracy, gangrape and extortion

COIMBATORE, 13 MAY

All nine men arrested in the sensational Pollachi sexual assault and extortion case in 2019, were convicted and sentenced to "life imprisonment till death" by a Mahila Court here on Tuesday.

Judge R Nandhini Devi, pronouncing the quantum of punishment, ordered a compensation of Rs 85 lakh to the eight victims.

The nine accused, Rishwanth alias N Sabarirajan, K Thirunavukkarasu, M Sathish, T Vasanthakumar, R Manivannan alias Mani, P Babu alias 'Bike' Babu, K Arulanantham, T Haronimus Paul and M Arunkumar, all aged between 30 and 39 year,- were brought to the court from the Salem Central Prison amidst tight security.

Accused people in the Pollachi sexual assault case being produced at a court in Coimbatore on Tuesday *PHOTO: PTI*

The court awarded different life terms, ranging from one to five and different prison terms, ranging between three to 10 years to the accused. An overall fine of Rs 1.50 lakh was imposed on them.

The public prosecutor said that none of the 48 witness in the sensitive case turned hostile and that victims' anonymity was protected. During the trial, eight victims had deposed.

The accused have been charged with criminal conspiracy, sexual harassment, rape, gang rape, and extortion, in the series of incidents including blackmail that happened between 2016 and 2018.

The incident came to light in 2019 after one of the victims lodged a complaint with the police. The men had also filmed some of their acts.

While the local police and CB_CID probed the case initially, it subsequently handed over to the Central Bureau of Investigations.

Eight separate cases were clubbed together in this matter. *—PTI*

A relative of Sukhwinder Singh, who died after consuming spurious liquor, mourns at a village in Majitha near Amritsar on Tuesday *PHOTO: PTI*

Hooch kills 21 in Punjab; kingpin, nine others held

CHANDIGARH, 13 MAY

10individuals were arrested in connection with the death of 21 people who consumed spurious alcohol in Majitha area of Punjab's Amritsar district.

Majitha deputy superintendent of police, Amolak Singh and Majitha station house officer sub-inspector Avtar Singh were suspended for "gross negligence." Departmental inquiries were initiated against them.

21 people have died in Bhangali Kalan, Patalpuri, Marari Kalan, Threawal, Talwandi Khumman and Karnala villages after consuming the toxic liquor. Six were hospitalized following health complications.

The police arrested 10 people, including the kingpin Sahib Singh, local distributors and sellers and the main suppliers of methanol, a fatal chemical used in industrial products.

Pankaj Kumar alias Sahil and Arvind Kumar, owners of Sahil Chemicals in Ludhiana had supplied the methanol. Local distributors Prabhjit Singh and Kulbir Singh and local sellers Ninder Kaur, Sahib Singh, Gurjant Singh, Arun alias Kala and Sikander Singh alias Pappu were arrested.

The methanol, after being procured online, was used in manufacturing spurious liquor. Investigation is underway to uncover the entire modus operandi. Prabhjit had reportedly received methanol in a 50-litre jerry can from Sahib. Another consignment of methanol ordered by him from a Delhi-based firm is in transit.

Excise and police teams have been dispatched to seize the consignment. *—PTI*

SC 'unblocks' YouTube channel '4PM'

NEW DELHI, 13 MAY

The Supreme Court was on Tuesday informed that an order blocking YouTube channel '4PM', having a subscriber base of 73 lakh, was withdrawn.

Ssenior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for the petitioner, informed a bench of Justices B R Gavai and Augustine George Masih about the order.

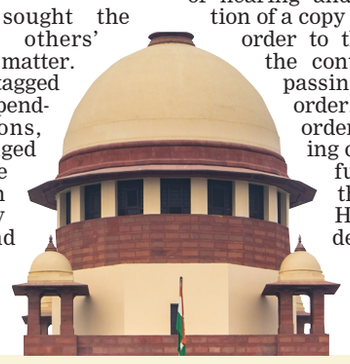
The apex court was hearing a plea filed by Sanjay Sharma, editor of digital news platform 4PM, seeking quashing of an order blocking the channel, terming it a "chilling assault on journalistic independence."

The blocking was effected by the intermediary pursuant to an undisclosed direction allegedly issued by the Centre citing vague grounds of "national security" and "public order".

The court sought the Centre and others' response in the matter.

The plea was tagged with separate pending petitions, which challenged Rule 16 of the Information Technology (Procedure and Safeguards for Blocking for Access of Information by Public) Rules, 2009.

The plea sought striking down Rule 9 of the Blocking Rules, 2009, to mandate issuance of a notice, opportunity of hearing and communication of a copy of the interim order to the creator of the content prior to passing of a final order. No blocking order or underlying complaint was furnished to the petitioner. He was also denied a fair opportunity to clarify his case. *—PTI*



Mishaps: SC firm on cashless treatment

NEW DELHI, 13 MAY

The Supreme Court on Tuesday directed the Centre to implement "in true letter and spirit" cashless treatment scheme for road accident victims.

A bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan directed the Centre to file an affidavit by the end of August 2025, setting out the implementation of the scheme giving details such as the number of beneficiaries under the scheme. *—PTI*

SC rejects bail for businessman in drug case

NEW DELHI, 13 MAY

The Supreme Court of India has denied the bail application of Delhi businessman Harpreet Singh Talwar, implicated in the Rs 21,000 crore Mundra port drug smuggling case.

A bench comprising Justices Surya Kant and N Kotiswar Singh described the allegations of terror financing against Talwar as premature while allowing him to reapply for bail in six months. The National Investigation Agency alleges that the heroin seizure, amounting to 2,988.21 kg, was linked to funding activities of Lashkar-e-Taiba. The drugs were discovered in containers arriving from Afghanistan via Iran in September 2021. *—PTI*

Kerala to move court for withheld funds

THIRU.PURAM, 13 MAY

The Kerala government has announced plans to explore both legal action and protests to reclaim over Rs 1,500 crore in funds allegedly withheld by the Centre.

The funds are linked to various centrally sponsored schemes, with the Centre's decision said to be influenced by Kerala's refusal to sign the PM SHRI scheme memorandum, which aims to upgrade select schools across India.

State General Education Minister V Sivankutty stated that Kerala will collaborate with Tamil Nadu to advocate for their rightful financial entitlements, highlighting perceived discriminatory practices by the central government.

Sivankutty *PHOTO: PTI*

Sivankutty referenced to PTI a Supreme Court ruling that clarified states are not legally obligated to implement the National Education Policy (NEP), as it now allows Kerala to pursue its claims in the apex court. He has made multiple appeals to the Union Education Minister and written to the Centre requesting the release of the withheld funds, which also include amounts related to the Samagra Shiksha Kerala (SSK) initiative.

In light of a lack of positive responses from the Centre, Sivankutty emphasized that the state will now seek legal remedies and organise protests, calling for equitable treatment from the Union government *—PTI*

U'khand Waqf Board asks madrassas to follow state board

DEHRADUN, 13 MAY

The Uttarakhand Waqf Board has asked more than 100 madrassas being run on its properties in the state to register with the Uttarakhand Board of School Education and adopt its syllabus completely.

"The decision was taken so that madrassa-going children also get the same modern education as other children," Uttarakhand Waqf Board Chairman Shadab Shams told PTI on Tuesday.

The idea is to give modern education to madrassa-going children and enable them to deal with the challenges of the day in a highly competitive academic and professional world, he said.

All madrassa management authorities have been informed of the board's decision and asked to take steps accordingly, he said.

They have been asked to apply to the Chief Education Officer for registration with the Uttarakhand Board of School Education. *—PTI*

Gavai will uphold SC values: CJI

NEW DELHI, 13 MAY

Overwhelmed by the rich accolades on his last day at the Supreme Court, Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna on Tuesday said he was certain that his successor CJI-designate Justice BR Gavai would uphold values of the Supreme Court, fundamental rights and the basic constitutional doctrines.

Sanjiv Khanna *PHOTO: PTI*

The ceremonial bench comprised the outgoing CJI Khanna, his successor Gavai, and Justice Sanjay Kumar, showcasing a rare moment of reflection, celebration, and reverence, not just for Justice Khanna's contributions, but the legacy of his uncle former Supreme Court judge Justice HR Khanna that he took forward.

The CJI expressed confidence in the latter's leadership and commitment to constitutional values.

"We got elevated the same year. Here we are in the collegium, and thereafter, we have interacted on several occasions. And I must say, he has been my biggest support. And I am sure that you have in Justice Gavai an excellent chief justice who's going to uphold the institution and who's going to uphold the fundamental rights who's going to uphold our basic doctrines which we have adopted and applied," Justice Khanna said. *—PTI*

Husband's affair not grounds for suicide charges: HC

NEW DELHI, 13 MAY

The Delhi High Court has clarified that a husband's extramarital affair does not constitute cruelty or abetment of suicide unless it can be demonstrated that the relationship harassed or tormented the wife. Justice Sanjeev Narula delivered this ruling while granting bail to a man charged under Indian Penal Code sections 498A (cruelty), 304-B (dowry death), and 306 (abetment of suicide) following the unnatural death of his wife in March 2024. The prosecution had cited evidence, including videos and chat records, to suggest the husband was involved with another woman. However, the court maintained that, by itself, an extramarital affair does not meet the legal standards for cruelty or abetment unless it contributes directly to psychological torment of the spouse. The court underscored the necessity of linking such claims to dowry demands or sustained domestic cruelty prior to the wife's death.

PHOTO: PTI

Having been in custody since March 2024, the court noted that extending his incarceration would serve no purpose, especially as the chargesheet was filed and the trial was not anticipated to conclude soon. The judge found no risk of evidence tampering or flight, allowing for the man's release on a personal bond of Rs 50,000 with two sureties.

The woman's family had alleged ongoing domestic violence and coercion to secure loans for a vehicle, but the court highlighted that no such complaints were raised while she was alive, diminishing the credibility of those claims. *—PTI*

93% TOTAL SUCCESS RATE

Girls outperform boys in both CBSE Class 10, 12 board exams

NEW DELHI, 13 MAY

Girls have outperformed boys in both the CBSE 10 and 12 board exams declared on Tuesday. While girls outperformed boys by 2 percent in the class 10 board exams, boys lagged behind girls by five percent in the class 12 exams.

Over 93 per cent of students cleared the CBSE class 10 board exams, marginally up from 2024's pass percentage of 93.60 per cent.

While 95 per cent of the girls cleared the exam, it was 92.63 per cent for the boys and 95 per cent for transgender candidates.

Over 1.99 lakh candidates have scored above 90 per cent marks, while 45,516 candidates have scored above 95 per cent.

A total of 23,71,939 candidates had appeared for the exams.

- While 95 per cent of the girls cleared the exam, it was 92.63 per cent for the boys and 95 per cent for transgender candidates. Over 1.99 lakh candidates have scored above 90 per cent marks

Meanwhile, 88.39 per cent of candidates have cleared the class 12 board exams exams, a marginal rise from last year's pass percentage of 87.98 per cent.

91.64 per cent of the girls, 85.70 per cent of the boys and 50 per cent of transgender candidates cleared the examination.

A total of 1,11,544 candidates, including 290 with special needs scored above 90 per cent marks, while 24,867 candidates have scored above 95 per cent.

16,92,794 had candidates appeared for the exam this year

The Vijaywada region recorded the highest pass percentage at 99.60 per cent, followed by Trivandrum at 99.32 per cent. Prayagraj reported the lowest pass percentage of 79.53 per cent.

Among the schools, the Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas recorded the highest pass percentage at 99.9 per cent, while the lowest was by private or independent schools at 87.94 per cent.

95.01 per cent candidates in foreign schools also cleared the exam. *—PTI*

Class 12 students celebrate after CBSE exam results in Bhubaneswar on Tuesday *PHOTO: PTI*

TRUMP & TRUMPISM

Campaigners from the 'Stop Trump Coalition' wear masks of Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg and Britain Prime Minister Keir Starmer while demanding higher taxation of Big Tech companies such as Meta, X and Amazon, outside Meta Offices in London, on Tuesday. The 'Stop Trump Coalition' is a group of people across the UK, who are determined to resist US President Donald Trump and his 'Trumpism' ***PHOTO: PTI***

Trump & Pope Leo: Earth's most powerful Americans

The motto of one newly elected American world leader: "Fight!" The other introduced himself to the world with his first public word as pope: "Peace."

The contrast between US President Donald Trump and Chicago-born Pope Leo XIV couldn't be more stark — politically, personally or in their world views. They lead in different roles and realms.

But Leo's historic election last week to lead the world's 1.4 billion Catholics as the first US-born pope means that the two most powerful people on the planet are Americans.

That raises questions about American influence at a time when Trump's tariff wars and "one way or the other" threats have upended eight decades of global order and sparked distrust among allies toward US.

The prospect of too much American power in geopolitics is widely considered one reason that the Catholic Church had not elected an American to the papacy across the country's nearly 250-year history. Until, that is, the former Cardinal Robert F Prevost of Chicago — Pope Leo XIV — was chosen last week to be the 267th pontiff.

"The irony of Leo's election is that many in the rest of the world will view it as a sign of hope — as an American who can speak for them rather than act against them," said David Gibson, Director of Fordham University's Centre on Religion and Culture.

The shock and delight of the not-well-known Cardinal's election soon shifted into robust discussion about how the top of the global pecking order could be populated by two Americans.

Trump is known to not enjoy sharing attention or primacy, as his "America first" foreign policy approach makes clear. American Catholics chose Trump over his Democratic rival, Kamala Harris.

In one apparent appeal to them, Trump posted an AI-generated image of himself dressed as a pope during the days of mourning for Pope Francis, who died 21 April. The move was not appreciated by some Catholics and Italians. Trump denied posting the image himself and said anyone who was offended "can't take a joke." He insisted that "the Catholics loved it."

US President Donald Trump and Pope Leo XIV ***PHOTO: PTI***

Even so, Trump wished Leo well and called it a "great honour" that the new Pope was American.

Pope Leo, meanwhile, is in some senses a politician as well, with a calm manner and the approach of talking to his fellow cardinals in small groups before the conclave, they said.

Though he was born in Chicago, Leo — then Prevost — spent two decades as a missionary in Peru before being appointed by Pope Francis in 2023 to lead the Vatican's powerful office that vets bishops around the world.

He wouldn't be the first pope to wade into world politics. But Leo enters the papacy having already criticised Vice President JD Vance, the highest-profile Catholic in American politics, on social media. Leo is at odds with the administration on such policy issues as immigration — Trump's signature issue — and the environment.

Like Trump, Leo has turned his attention to the media. On Monday in Vatican City, he called for the release of imprisoned journalists and affirmed the calling for "all of us to safeguard the precious gift of free speech and of the press."

In early February, Leo — then still Prevost — shared an article from a Catholic publication with the headline, "JD Vance is wrong: Jesus doesn't ask us to rank our love for others." It came days after Vance — a convert to Catholicism — discussed immigration in a Fox News interview by referencing a Christian tenet.

Leo, speaking Italian to thousands gathered in St Peter's Square, described a different vision for the Church and human relations

Vance suggested the papacy is "bigger" than politics and social media. In the rise of Trump at the same time as Leo, "the gospel meets the culture," said Steven Millies, Director of The Bernardin Centre at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago.

Religion and politics, he added, are misaligned because they are "oriented toward different purposes."

Leo's decades in Peru — he is a citizen of both countries — can give him a broader view of humanity and power, and religion and politics, scholars say.

Beyond the obvious personality differences with Trump, Leo is expected to wield power differently — to the neediest people first, for example, whereas Trump cut off American aid.

Leo did not mention his American roots during his first speech, nor did he speak in English — a sign, some Vatican watchers said, of his global priorities. *—PTI*

SALAR سالار بنگلور

Steroids behind rise in hip damage among youth

Group of orthopaedic experts have raised a serious public health concern, stating the misuse of steroids and unregulated protein powders is severely damaging the hips of young gym-going individuals in their 20s.

This warning came during the "Delhi Hip 360" conference held in the national capital, where orthopaedic specialists highlighted the alarming rise in cases of Avascular Necrosis (AVN) and early hip degeneration in youth, conditions traditionally seen in older adults.

L Tomar, the organising Chairman of the conference, said, "We are observing a significant surge in hip-related complaints among young patients in recent years. Every week in my OPD, I see two to three patients under the age of 30, many in their early 20s, complaining of persistent hip pain."

"Investigations often reveal AVN, a condition where blood supply to the hip bone is compromised, leading to bone death. In over 70 per cent of these cases, there is a history of anabolic steroid use or excessive consumption of unverified protein powders," said Tomar, who is the unit head of orthopaedics and joint replacement at Max Hospital, Delhi.

Recent studies have indicated a rise in hip issues among youth and how alcohol and steroid use were key contributors to AVN among young adults, he said.

More recently, the Maharashtra FDA launched statewide checks on protein powders after several brands were found to be spiked with performance-enhancing steroids, many of which are freely available online or at gyms without proper labelling or approvals.

Youth, especially those chasing rapid physical transformation, are unknowingly damaging their bone health, particularly the femoral head of the hip joint, which is uniquely sensitive to blood flow changes, Dr Tomar pointed out.

There is a thriving underground online market for performance-enhancing drugs and muscle-building supplements in India.

Dr Rajiv Jain, senior orthopaedic surgeon, said that steroids, especially when misused or consumed unsupervised, directly impact the blood supply to the bones.

"It (AVN) begins with pain, stiffness, and limping and in many cases, leads to complete collapse of the hip joint. Hip replacements are required for patients whose condition can be treated using medications," Dr Jain stated.

The condition, AVN, is not only painful but also often irreversible if not diagnosed early. In extreme cases, the only treatment is total hip replacement, a complex procedure typically meant for older patients.

Orthopaedic experts say this is becoming disturbingly common in India's urban youth.

Another observation presented by orthopaedic researchers at the conference revealed that over 30 per cent of AVN cases seen in Delhi's tertiary hospitals over the past three years involved patients under 35, and most had a history of either steroid injection, oral steroid abuse or supplement misuse.

Dr Sharad Agarwal, scientific chairman of the conference and senior orthopaedic surgeon, said that fitness has become a booming industry in India, but without proper regulation and education.

"What they don't realise is that behind that muscle, their bones might be silently deteriorating. We urgently need awareness drives, regulation of supplement markets, and basic orthopaedic screening at gyms," Dr Agarwal said.

Doctors have urged fitness trainers, influencers and gym owners to educate their clients about the risks of shortcuts like steroid cycles and unverified protein supplements. *—PTI*

The condition, Avascular Necrosis is not only painful but also often irreversible if not diagnosed early ***PHOTO: FREEPIK***

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Why is Indian football so far behind when compared to cricket?

Just weeks after India's football team recalled a 40-year-old out of retirement, cricket found a new hero 26 years younger. Cricket is the much more popular sport but will football always be so far behind?

On 28 April, Vaibhav Suryavanshi made headlines around the world. Just 14, the cricketer became the youngest player to score 100 runs, a landmark milestone in the sport, in the Indian Premier League (IPL). Amazingly, as the league, founded in 2008, attracts the best players in the sport, he is also the second fastest ever to reach a century, taking just 35 balls. While his age is unusual, Indian cricket produces many young talents.

For soccer fans in the country of 1.4 billion, the situation is a little different. Just weeks prior to the teenager's achievement in Jaipur which has pundits asking when he will go on to represent India's cricket team, the head coach of the soccer team had to recall Sunil Chhetri, a 40-year-old striker, from international retirement to come and play. While Chhetri has scored 95 international goals — of those still playing only Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi have scored more — it was a decision that provoked a lot of debate in the media and among fans.

"Sunil was recalled as we have a lack of strikers who can score goals," Arunava Chaudhuri , former COO of Indian Super League (ISL) club Mumbai City, told DW. "We have an issue about talent at this moment. Players coming through is a problem, with some settling into the system only around the age of 25."

India is the premier power in the world of cricket. In football, however, it is far from the top. The national team broke into the top 100 in FIFA's rankings in 2023 for the first time since 2018, but has since dropped to 127. India lost all three games at the Asian Cup in 2024, a year that ended winless. Such pressures may explain why Chhetri was recalled.

Compared to cricket, there are a lack of young players coming through in the beautiful game. "Cricket continues to find stars as the majority of the youth are trying to emulate the icons." As well as plentiful heroes, there is a pathway for cricketers to get to the top of the game. In football, that has yet to be developed. "The structure is weak, and the system does not exist where talent is identified at the right time and they get nurtured," said Prahhakaran.

ISL started out with eight teams in 2014 and became the top tier of Indian football in 2022 ***PHOTO: PTI***

Tom Byer is regarded as one of the most influential voices in youth development in Asian football and was hired by the Chinese Ministry of Education in 2013 to help bring the game to country's massive population. He sees India as in a similar position.

"India has 180 million children under the age of seven," Byer told DW. "Yet there's no national strategy focused on this foundational stage. That's both the blind spot and the opportunity. If India truly wants to develop in football, it must cultivate a football culture—and that begins at home, not with foreign coaches or imported systems."

It is not just about the national teams at one end, and children at the other, the domestic leagues have a huge role to play in developing young talent. In India, there is a huge difference between the respective competitions. The IPL is one of the top five most lucrative domestic sporting leagues in the world. In December 2024, US investment bank Houlihan Lokey stated that its business valuation was Euro 14.5 billion.

The ISL started out with eight teams in 2014 and became the top tier of Indian football in 2022. It started with great publicity and famous foreign players like Alessandro Del Piero, David Trezeguet and David James, and was initially a standalone tournament lasting just a few weeks.

The big names have gone, but there are now 13 teams and a season that runs for seven months. Despite that growth, there is still a long way to go.

"The senior teams in the ISL play 30 games, half what globally competitive players play and the youth side is less than that," said Prabhakaran. "There is a need for more games."

Owen Coyle is a former English Premier League head coach and is now in charge of ISL club Chennaiyin.

"We need big stakeholders and money to be invested in the grassroots," he said in December. "Instead of getting those kids at 18-19, what if we explore their talents when they are 11? If we do, we can give the national team far better opportunities to develop."

Football clubs in India do not, however, have the revenue streams that the IPL teams benefit from. In 2022, the cricket league sold broadcast rights for over Euro 5 billion. Figures for the ISL's equivalent sale in 2023 were not disclosed but the reserve price was reportedly around Euro 59 million.

In Asia's top football league, in Japan, the clubs have played a huge part in identifying and developing talent but a lack of financial resources is an issue in India.

"ISL Clubs are not able to invest in player development as the commercial side of sport is very weak," he added. "They are not going all out to look at youth talent. We don't have the money to invest."

There is still hope for the world's most populous country to find success in the world's most popular sport, and always a chance that football could find its own Vaibhav Suryavanshi.

"If a 14-year-old is identified as a big talent, not by India, but by the global giants saying 'this is where we have found a diamond' this would be bigger than this 14-year-old in cricket," said Prabhakaran.

"Because the whole global attention and Indian attention would shift and that would have a huge impact… this is where it will explode." *—DW News*

6 Bulgarians convicted in UK of spying for Russia

LONDON, 13 MAY

Six Bulgarians convicted of carrying out a sophisticated spying operation for Russia were sentenced by a London judge Monday to prison terms up to nearly 11 years. The group that used Hollywood code names discussed kidnapping or killing Kremlin opponents as they targeted reporters, diplomats and Ukrainian troops in the UK, Germany, Austria, Spain and Montenegro between 2020 and 2023, prosecutors said. No one was physically harmed but the group put lives in jeopardy, prosecutors said. Justice Nicholas Hilliard said, "The defendants put these things at risk by using this country as a base from which to plan the various operations. ... Anyone who uses this country in that way, in the circumstances of this case, commits a very serious offense." *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

French actor Depardieu guilty of sexual assault

PARIS, 13 MAY

A Paris court on Tuesday found actor Gerard Depardieu guilty of having sexually assaulted two women on a 2021 film set, giving him an 18-month suspended prison sentence. The actor, 76, has been convicted of having groped a 54-year-old set dresser and a 34-year-old assistant during the filming of 'Les Volets Verts' ('The Green Shutters'). The case was widely seen as a key post-#MeToo test of how French society and its film industry address allegations of sexual misconduct involving prominent figures. Depardieu, who has denied the accusations, didn't attend Tuesday's hearing. Depardieu's long and storied career – he told the court that he's made more than 250 films – has turned him into a French movie giant. *—PTI*

Macron accepts Buckingham Palace invite to visit UK

LONDON, 13 MAY

French President Emmanuel Macron has accepted an invitation from King Charles III to pay a state visit to the UK in July, Buckingham Palace said Tuesday. Macron and his wife, Brigitte, will stay at Windsor Castle for the visit, which will take place from 8-10 July. Charles and Queen Camilla travelled to France in September 2023 in a visit that underscored Britain's aim to bolster ties with its closest European neighbour. The trip came after years of sometimes prickly relations strained by Britain's exit from the European Union and by disagreements over the growing number of migrants crossing the English Channel on small boats. *—PTI*

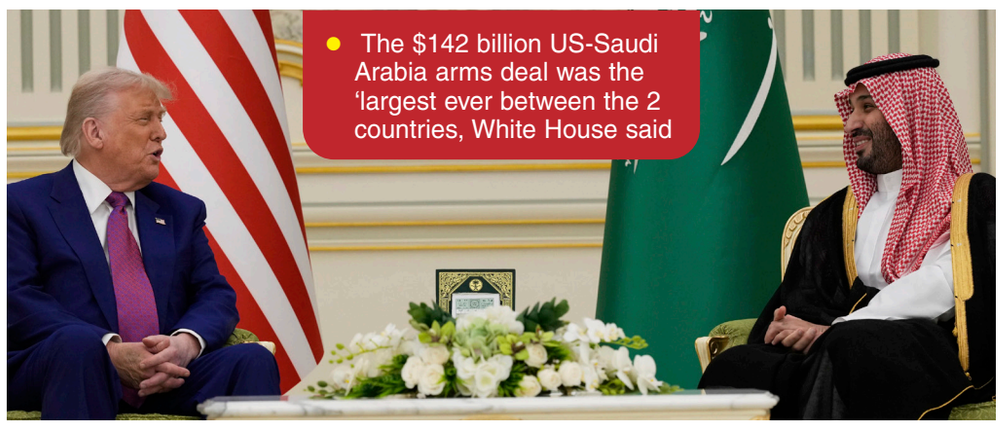
Kanlaon volcano erupts in the Philippines

MANILA, 13 MAY

The Kanlaon Volcano in central Philippines erupted briefly on Tuesday, sending a 4.5-kilometre ash plume skyward and generating rumblings heard in nearby areas. The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology reported that the moderately explosive eruption occurred just before dawn, lasting five minutes. The volcanic ash descended on at least nine villages southwest of the volcano on Negros Island, though no injuries or damage were reported. A level 3 alert remains in effect, indicating magmatic unrest and an increased likelihood of short-lived eruptions. Officials have established a 6-kilometre exclusion zone around the volcano. Kanlaon at 2453 metres height isan active volcano located in the Pcific 'Ring of Fire. A previous eruption in December necessitated the evacuation of thousands of residents. meters. *—PTI*

Saudi Arabia to invest $600 billion in America

Trump begins 4-day Gulf tour with grand Riyadh welcome



- The $142 billion US-Saudi Arabia arms deal was the 'largest ever between the 2 countries, White House said

President Donald Trump and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman speak during a meeting at the Royal Palace in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia **PHOTO: PTI**

RIYADH, 13 MAY

The White House said Saudi Arabia was set to invest USD 600 billion in United States including the largest defence sales agreement between the two countries for USD 142 billion even as the oil rich Arab state gave US President Donald Trump a lavish welcome at the opening of his four-day Middle East trip on Tuesday. Trump punched air as he emerged from Air Force One, Saudi Arabia rolled out an honour guard at the Riyadh Airport and feted him to a grand hall, where Trump and his aides were served traditional Arabic coffee.

"I really believe we like each other a lot,"Trump said during the meeting with Saudi Arabia's de-facto ruler as they set to sign deals on artificial intelligence and arms procurement. The two leaders will attend a grand dinner and investment conference with several major business leaders including Blackstone Group CEO Stephen Schwarzman, BlackRock CEO Larry Fink, and Tesla and SpaceX CEO Elon Musk attending.Saudi Arabia and fellow OPEC+ nations have stepped up oil production which according to Trump is a key component to stemming inflation for Americans and hasten an end to the Russia-Ukraine war.

Trump hopes to restart his first-term effort to normalise relations between the Israel and Saudi Arabia. Trump's Abraham Accords effort led to Sudan, the UAE, Bahrain and Morocco agreeing to normalise relations with Israel. But Riyadh has made clear that in exchange for normalisation it wants security guarantees, assistance with the kingdom's nuclear programme and progress on a pathway to Palestinian statehood, which seems to be difficult with the Israelis offensive threatening to flatten and occupy Gaza. Trump's skipping of Israel this visit is remarkable after the latter was left in the dark over the US deal with the Houthis. The trip may have brought him closer to Gulf countries than Israel observers say.

All the 3 countries on the president's itinerary, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and UAE, are all places where the Trump Organisation, run by Trump's 2 elder sons, is developing major real estate projects. They include a high-rise tower in Jeddah, a luxury hotel in Dubai and a golf course and villa complex in Qatar. *—PTI*

US sanctions on Iranians linked to n-programme

WASHINGTON DC, 13 MAY

The US Department of State has announced sanctions against three Iranian individuals and one Iranian entity connected to Iran's Organisation of Defensive Innovation and Research (SPND), the successor to the country's pre-2004 nuclear weapons programme, known as the Amad Project. US Secretary of State Marco Rubio stated that these individuals are implicated in the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The announcement comes after the conclusion of a 4th round of nuclear negotiations in Oman. The sanctions aim to impair SPND's nuclear research capabilities, as Iran continues uranium enrichment at 60 per cent purity,usingforeign front companies to acquire dual-use items. *—ANI*

Malaysian Airlines Flight MH17 was shot down in 2014 in the conflict between pro-Russian separatists and Ukrainian forces ***PHOTO: BERNAMA***

'Russia downed MH17 over Ukraine in 2014, killing 298'

MELBOURNE, 13 MAY

The Council of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) on Tuesday found Russia responsible for shooting down Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 over Ukraine with the loss of 298 lives more than a decade ago, in a ruling that raises the prospect of victims' families being paid compensation.

A Dutch-led international investigation concluded in 2016 that the Amsterdam-to-Kuala Lumpur airliner was shot down on July 17, 2014 from Ukrainian territory held by separatist rebels using a Buk missile system delivered from Russia.

Moscow denies any involvement in the MH17 tragedy. The Netherlands and Australian governments brought the case against ICAO in 2022 as Russia doesn't recognise the International Court of Justice.

The council found that Russia had violated the Convention on International Civil Aviation, known as the Chicago Convention, which requires that states "refrain from resorting to the use of weapons against civil aircraft in flight." It's the first time that the council, which represents 193 member states, has decided a dispute between governments.

Dutch Foreign Minister Caspar Veldkamp said that the council would consider the question of reparations within weeks. Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong urged the council to move swiftly to "determine remedies."

"We call on Russia to finally face up to its responsibility for its horrific act of violence and make reparations for its egregious conduct, as required under international law," Wong said in a statement.

Responding to the report, Kremlin in a statement refuted its conclusions saying it was not a party to the investigation. Australian National University international law expert Don Rothwell said that the council had yet to publish the reasons for its decisions and reparations which will determine further legal course or negotiations. *—PTI*

Amidst call for peace, Russia fires 10 drones at Ukraine

KYIV, 13 MAY

Russia launched 10 Shahed and decoy drones at Ukraine in nighttime attacks, the Ukrainian air force said Tuesday, in the smallest drone bombardment this year as the warring countries prepare for possible peace talks in Turkiye.

The Kremlin has not directly responded to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's challenge for Russian leader Vladimir Putin to meet him in person at the negotiations in Istanbul on Thursday.

Zelenskyy will not be meeting with any Russian officials in Istanbul other than Putin as lower level talks would amount to dragging out the peace process, Mykhailo Podolyak, an adviser to Zelenskyy, said Tuesday on a YouTube show run by prominent Russian journalists in exile.

Ukraine President Vlodomyr Zelenskyy **PHOTO: PTI**

European leaders have recently accused Putin of stalling peace efforts while he attempts to capture more Ukrainian land. Leaders from UK, France, Germany and Poland arrived at Kyiv over the weekend in a show of support for Ukraine ratcheting up pressure on Russia to accept a 30 day ceasefire backed by US President Donald Trump. Russia shunned the ceasefire proposal tabled by the US and EU leaders but offered direct talks with Ukraine.

European countries called for an unconditional ceasefire before talks but Russia has said talks should be unconditional. Both sides are preparing a spring-summer campaign on the battlefield. *—PTI*

BLA targeted military bases, seized security posts and checkpoints, intelligence centres of Pakistan **PHOTO: X**

Baloch rebels attacked 51 Pak sites 71 times

ISLAMABAD, 13 MAY

- BLA in a statement called on India and international community to take decisive action against Pakistan, cautioning that failure to do so would lead to more bloodshed.

The Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) has claimed responsibility for 71 "coordinated attacks" at more than 51 locations across Pakistan's Balochistan province, over the last few weeks, under its ongoing 'Operation Herof'.

In a statement issued on Sunday, the BLA said these operations targeted military convoys, checkpoints, intelligence centres, and infrastructure, aiming to challenge Pakistan's control and demonstrate the group's territorial reach. Key strikes occurred in Kech, Panjgur, Mastung, Quetta, and Nushki - ranging from ambushes and IED blasts to targeted killings and the seizure of security posts, it added.

Warning of a regional shift, BLA declared that a "new order has become inevitable" in South Asia as it cautioned that ongoing international tolerance of Pakistan's terror-related activities might contribute to broader regional instability. It called on India and the international community to take decisive action against Pakistan, cautioning that failure to do so would lead to more bloodshed.

"The BLA is neither a pawn nor a silent spectator; we are a dynamic and decisive party," the party's spokesperson Jeeyand Baloch said.

The Baloch Liberation Army is an armed group leading the self-determination movement of the Baloch people, since it was forcibly integrated into Pakistan in 1948, the Baloch people accused the regime in Islamabad of marginalising them, exploiting their resources without sharing the profits, and of systemic violence in the form of state-sponsored killings and forced disappearances. *—Agencies*

Mayoral candidate killed in Mexico ahead of elections

TEXISTEPEC, 13 MAY

Gunmen have murdered Yesenia Lara Gutiérrez, a mayoral candidate from Mexico's governing Morena party, along with four companions, marking the second assassination of a local candidate in Veracruz ahead of the 1 June elections. The attack occurred on Sunday while Lara Gutiérrez was leading a caravan of supporters through Texistepec, resulting in three additional injuries. Reports emerged later indicating that two federal agents were killed in a separate incident within the state.

Veracruz Governor Rocío Nahle, also from the Morena party of President Claudia Sheinbaum, confirmed that Lara Gutiérrez's daughter was among the deceased. Texistepec, located southwest of the significant port city of Coatzacoalcos, has seen growing concern over electoral violence.

In a press conference, Nahle remarked, "No (elected) position is worth dying for," pledging to ensure free and democratic elections. Community members voiced their fears about the escalating violence, with one supporter stating, "We're living the worst of the terrorism."

The violence continues to raise alarms, as local candidates are historically vulnerable to attacks by organised crime groups seeking control over local governance. *—PTI*

1 arrested over fire at UK PM's private home

LONDON, 13 MAY

Britain's counter-terrorism police are on Tuesday leading an investigation after a 21-year-old man was arrested on suspicion of arson following fires at London homes linked with Prime Minister Keir Starmer.

While the police has only referred to the London properties targeted over the course of the past five days as having connections with a "high-profile public figure", UK media reports have established that they are all associated with Starmer – who is currently resident at the official prime ministerial residence at 10 Downing Street in London. "The Met's Counter Terrorism Command are leading the investigation into this fire. Enquiries are ongoing to establish what caused it," the statement said. The police are also considering two other fire incidents on Thursday to se if they are connected. While Starmer resides at 10, Downing street, he still own the home damaged by fire on Monday night, No injuries were reported.

The UK PM's spokesperson said he had expressed his gratitude to the emergency services but declined to comment further on a "live investigation." *—PTI*

Germany bans extremist far right group, 4 arrested

BERLIN, 13 MAY

The German government has banned the largest "Reich citizen" group, an extremist far-right organisation that calls itself the "Kingdom of Germany" and seeks to undermine the country's democratic order. Four of its leaders have been arrested. "The members of this association have created a "counter-state" in our country and built up economic criminal structures," Interior Minister Alexander Dobrindt said, adding that the members of the group underpinned their supposed claim to power with antisemitic conspiracy narratives, a behaviour that cannot be tolerated. *—PTI*

TERROR UNCHECKED

Jihadi attack in Burkina Faso kills 100

BAMAKO, 12 MAY

Violent rampage by an Al-Qaeda linked jihadi group Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal-Muslimin, or JNIM which has been escalating its control over Burkina Faso killed more than 100 people, mostly soldiers, local residents said on Monday.

Run by a military junta, the landlocked western African nation of 23 million has been among the worst hit by the security crisis in Africa's Sahel region, known as the global hot spot for violent extremism. About half of Burkina Faso is outside of government control as a result of the violence that contributed to two coups in 2022. Government security forces have also been accused of extrajudicial killings.

Jihadi group has control over many parts of Burkina Faso **PHOTO: X**

The attack on several locations in the northern regions, including a military base and the long besieged strategic town of Djibo, occurred early Sunday, said an aid worker on condition of anonymity.

The aid worker, as well as Charlie Werb, an independent analyst focusing on the recounted how Sunday's attack began simultaneously in different locations simultaneously to disperse the Burkina Faso air force. "The main attack occurred in Djibo, where JNIM fighters first took control of all the town's entry checkpoints before attacking the military camps, particularly the Special Anti-Terrorist Unit's camp," said the aid worker.

The latest attack shows JNIM's escalating power and widening reach in Burkina Faso and their free movement, with analysts warning that the junta's strategy of military escalation, including the mass recruitment of civilians into poorly trained militias, is worsening inter-ethnic tensions. *—PTI*

Australian cabinet sworn in after a landslide win

CANBERRA, 13 MAY

Albanese **PHOTO: YOUTUBE**

Australia's new Cabinet was sworn into office on Tuesday after the centre-left Labor Party was re-elected in a landslide poll on 3 May.

With vote counting continuing, Labor expects to hold between 92 and 95 seats in the 150-seat House of Representatives. The party held 78 seats in the previous Parliament.

The conservative opposition alliance of parties is on track to win 41 seats in one of its worst election results.

The Cabinet held its first meeting after the swearing-in ceremony.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese plans to fly to Jakarta on Wednesday to meet Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto. He then intends to fly from Indonesia to Rome to attend the inauguration of Pope Leo XIV on Sunday.

While in Rome, he plans to meet for the first time a range of world leaders including Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney.

The conservative opposition Liberal Party on Tuesday elected former minister Sussan Ley as their new leader. She is the first woman to lead the party that was founded in 1944. *—PTI*

Retail inflation at 6-yr low; sparks rate cut hopes

NEW DELHI, 13 MAY

Retail inflation eased to a nearly six-year low of 3.16 per cent in April mainly due to subdued prices of vegetables, fruits, pulses, and other protein-rich items, creating enough room for the Reserve Bank to go for another round of rate cut in the June monetary policy review.

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) based inflation was 3.34 per cent in March and 4.83 per cent in April 2024. It was 3.15 per cent in July 2019.

NSO data showed a sharp decline of 91 basis points in food inflation in April 2025 in comparison to March 2025. The food inflation in April 2025 is the lowest since October 2021.

Food inflation in April was 1.78 per cent, lower than 2.69 per cent in the preceding month and 8.7 per cent in the year-ago month, showed data released by the National Statistics Office (NSO) on Tuesday.

- The RBI, mandated to ensure inflation remains at 4 per cent with a margin of 2 per cent on either side, has slashed the key interest rate by 50 basis points in two tranches as the situation improved

The Reserve Bank, which has been mandated to ensure inflation remains at 4 per cent with a margin of 2 per cent on either side, has slashed the key interest rate by 50 basis points in two tranches (February and April) as the price situation improved.

The central bank has projected the CPI inflation for the financial year 2025-26 at 4 per cent, with Q1 at 3.6 per cent; Q2 at 3.9 per cent; Q3 at 3.8 per cent; and Q4 at 4.4 per cent. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

Gold price surges by ₹950 to ₹97,500/10g

NEW DELHI, 13 MAY

Gold price rallied by Rs 950 to Rs 97,500 per 10g in the national capital on Tuesday amid firm trend in overseas markets, according to the All India Sarafa Association. Gold of 99.5 per cent purity jumped Rs 1,000 to Rs 97,100 per 10g. On Monday, gold of 99.9 per cent and 99.5 per cent fell sharply by Rs 3,400 each to Rs 96,550 and Rs 96,100 per 10g, respectively. Meanwhile, silver depreciated Rs 250 to Rs 99,450 per kg. "Gold prices have risen again after a sharp correction, as safe-haven demand eased following a pause in the US-China trade war," Abans Financial Services' CEO Chintan Mehta said. *—PTI*

Rupee gains 3P to settle at 85.33 against USD

MUMBAI, 13 MAY

The rupee pared most of its initial gains to settle 3 paise higher at 85.33 (provisional) against the American currency on Tuesday, due to rising appetite for riskier assets amid easing trade tariff tensions. However, rising crude oil prices, a strong US dollar and the emergence of profit booking in domestic equities restricted the rise of the domestic unit, traders said. At the interbank foreign exchange, the domestic unit opened at 84.70 and moved between the intra-day high of 84.62 and the low of 85.48 against the greenback. The unit ended the session at 85.33, registering a gain of 3 paise. *—PTI*

Ahmedabad airport records 15% jump in footfall

AHMEDABAD, 13 MAY

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport in Ahmedabad welcomed an unprecedented 1.34 crore passengers in the recently concluded financial year 2024-25, marking a substantial 14.8 per cent increase compared to the 1.16 crore travellers in the preceding financial year, the airport operator said in a statement Tuesday. According to Ahmedabad International Airport Limited (AIAL), which manages Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport, this growth trajectory underscores Ahmedabad's importance as a destination and a crucial transit point. *—ANI*

Lupin launches generic kidney disorder drug in US

NEW DELHI, 13 MAY

Pharma major Lupin Ltd on Tuesday said it has launched the generic version of Tolvaptan tablets used to slow kidney function decline in US market, following the recent approval received from the country's health regulator. The company has launched Tolvaptan tablets of strengths 15mg, 30mg, 45mg, 60mg, and 90 mg in US, after receiving the approval from the US Food and Drug Administration. Tolvaptan tablets are bioequivalent to Jynarque Tablets of Otsuka Pharmaceutical Company, Ltd, and are indicated to slow kidney function decline in adults at risk of rapidly progressing autosomal dominant polycystic kidney disease, it added. *—PTI*

Markets crash after sharp rally on Indo-Pak truce call

Sensex tanks 1,282 pts, Nifty drops 346.35 pts; IT shares slide

MUMBAI, 13 MAY

Stock markets tumbled on Tuesday with benchmark Sensex falling by 1,282 points due to profit-taking in IT, auto and private banking shares a day after a record rally.

The 30-share BSE barometer tanked 1,281.68 points or 1.55 per cent to settle at 81,148.22 with 25 of its constituents closing with losses and five with gains. During the day, it fell sharply by 1,386.21 points or 1.68 per cent to 81,043.69.

The broader Nifty of NSE dropped 346.35 points or 1.39 per cent to 24,578.35.

From the Sensex firms, Infosys declined the most by 3.54 per cent.

Power Grid dropped 3.4 per cent, Eternal by 3.38 per cent, HCL Tech by 2.94 per cent, Tata Consultancy Services by 2.88 per cent and Bharti Airtel by 2.74 per cent. IndusInd Bank, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, NTPC, Maruti, Tata Motors, and M&M were also among the laggards.

Broader markets closed with gains on Tuesday with the BSE smallcap gauge jumping 0.99 per cent and midcap index by 0.17 per cent *PHOTO: X*

Sun Pharma, Adani Ports, Bajaj Finance, State Bank of India and Tech Mahindra were the gainers.

Profit-taking was evident across the board, with IT, FMCG, and auto sectors emerging as the top losers, Ajit Mishra – SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd said.

Sensex and Nifty logged their best single-day gains in absolute terms on Monday following buying by retail and foreign investors after India and Pakistan reached an understanding to stop military actions and the US and China announced a deal to lower tariffs significantly.

Broader markets closed with gains on Tuesday with the BSE smallcap gauge jumping 0.99 per cent and midcap index by 0.17 per cent.

Among sectoral indices, BSE Focused IT tanked 2.44 per cent, teck (2.39 per cent), IT (2.21 per cent), utilities (1.35 per cent), power (1 per cent), metal (0.95 per cent) and oil & gas (0.95 per cent).

Healthcare, industrials, capital goods, services and consumer durables were the gainers. *—PTI*

Free trade in 'crisis': WTO chief

TOKYO, 13 MAY

Highlighting that the global free trade is in crisis, World Trade Organisation Director Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala on Tuesday told Japanese Prime Minister Shigaru Ishiba that she has high expectations for Japan as a champion of open markets, as US President Donald Trump disrupts world commerce with his fast-changing tariffs and other policies.

"Trade is facing very challenging times right now and it is quite difficult," she said. "We should try to use this crisis as an opportunity to solve the challenges we have and take advantage of new trends in trade."

Japan, as "a champion of the multilateral trading system" must help maintain, strengthen and reform the WTO, the Japanese Foreign Ministry cited her as saying.

They met a day after the United States and China said they had agreed to slash recent sky- high tariffs for 90 days to allow time for negotiations.

World Trade Organization Director General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala meets Japan's Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba in Tokyo on Tuesday *PHOTO: PTI*

Japan is among many countries yet to reach a deal with the Trump administration on hikes to US tariffs, including those on autos, steel and aluminum.

The WTO played a pivotal role in past decades as the US and other major economies championed the trade liberalisation that facilitated the growth of global supply chains, many of which are anchored in China.

By dismantling many protectionist barriers to trade, it has aided the ascent of Japan and China, and many other countries, as export manufacturing hubs.

The two leaders agreed that WTO member countries should unite to restore the organization's capacity to address challenges. *—PTI*

SIPS MAY ATTRACT $45B TO MUTUAL FUND INDUSTRY

NEW DELHI, 13 MAY

India's mutual fund industry is expected to see strong inflows of USD 40-45 billion in the financial year 2025-26, mainly driven by steady SIP (Systematic Investment Plan) contributions.

According to a report by Bernstein, this estimate is based on the April 2025 run-rate of USD 3 billion in monthly SIP flows. While the projected inflows are slightly lower than the record USD 55 billion seen in FY25, they remain significantly higher than FY24's total of USD 30 billion and also above long-term averages. "We think flows into mutual funds will remain resilient, at USD 40-45 billion for FY26. We expect this to be driven by SIP money," it said.

India's mutual fund industry continues to benefit from SIPs, the report said. *—ANI*

Google opens applications for AI startups

NEW DELHI, 13 MAY

Google has announced that applications are now open for the Google for Startups Accelerator: AI First India 2025 programme, aimed at supporting early-stage AI startups in India. Startups from Seed to Series A stages, particularly those working in Agentic AI and Multimodal AI, are encouraged to apply before the deadline of 30 June.

Launched in collaboration with the MeitY Startup Hub, the initiative aligns with the government's broader IndiaAI Mission, which seeks to boost the country's rapidly evolving AI ecosystem. Google highlighted projections that India's generative AI market could surpass USD 17 billion by 2030, playing a key role in achieving its USD 1 trillion digital economy goal by 2028.

PHOTO: PTI

Selected startups will receive mentorship from Google teams including DeepMind, Cloud, Android, and Ads. They'll also benefit from cloud credits, access to tools like Gemini, Gemma, Imagen, and Veo, and guidance on integrating with the Google Cloud Marketplace.

Last year's cohort raised over USD 61 million, with significant improvements in market reach and product development.

Google hopes to replicate this success in 2025. *—ANI*

UNITEDHEALTH CEO STEPS DOWN; SUSPENDS 2025 OUTLOOK

WASHINGTON, 13 MAY

UnitedHealth CEO Andrew Witty is stepping down for personal reasons and the nation's largest health insurer suspended its full-year financial outlook due to higher-than-expected medical costs.

Chairman Stephen Hemsley will become CEO, effective immediately, the Minnesota company said.

Andrew Witty

Hemsley was UnitedHealth Group CEO from 2006 to 2017. He will remain chairman of the company's board. Witty will serve as a senior adviser to Hemsley.

Witty joined the company in 2018 after serving about nine years as CEO of the British drugmaker GlaxoSmithKline. He was named UnitedHealth's CEO in February 2021, replacing Dave Wichmann.

UnitedHealth became one of the nation's largest companies under Witty's leadership. Total revenue topped USD 400 billion last year, a 55 per cent increase from the USD 257 billion UnitedHealth brought in the year before Witty became CEO.

UnitedHealth said Tuesday that it suspended its 2025 outlook as medical costs of many Medicare Advantage beneficiaries new to UnitedHealthcare were higher than expected. More than 50 million people have health insurance under UnitedHealth Group Inc. *—PTI*

INDIA-US TRADE PACT

Retaliatory tariffs may mar prospects

NEW DELHI, 13 MAY

India's proposal to impose retaliatory import duty on certain US products in response to American tariffs on steel and aluminium could cast a shadow over ongoing negotiations for a trade agreement between the two countries, think tank GTRI said on Tuesday.

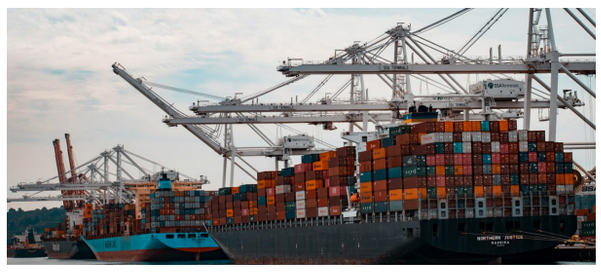
Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) said that if the US engages in consultations with India on the matter or withdraws tariffs, a resolution may be reached.

Otherwise, India's retaliatory import duties could take effect in early June, potentially impacting US exporters and deepening trade frictions, it added.

In a significant move targeting US safeguard duties on steel, aluminium, and their derivative products, India has formally notified the World Trade Organisation (WTO) of its intention to suspend trade concessions granted to the US.

The proposed suspension of concessions could take the form of increased tariffs on selected US products. While India has not disclosed those items yet, in a similar move in 2019, it had imposed retaliatory tariffs on 28 US products, ranging from almonds and apples to chemicals.

The notice, issued on 12 May, marks India's invocation of its rights under a provision of the WTO Agreement on Safeguards (AoS). *—PTI*



Unless the US engages in consultations with India or withdraws tariffs India's retaliatory duties could take effect in June *PHOTO: ANI*

Indian generic firms safe from Trump's drug move

NEW DELHI, 13 MAY

Indian generic drugmakers are unlikely to be affected by the US government's 30-day deadline for companies to reduce prescription medicine prices, say industry experts.

The executive order, signed by President Donald Trump, instructs the US health department to negotiate new drug prices – primarily impacting innovator pharmaceutical firms.

Sudarshan Jain, Secretary General of the Indian Pharmaceutical Alliance, said generics operate on razor-thin margins and already account for 90 per cent of prescription volumes in the US while representing just 13 per cent of market value.

India, the world's largest supplier of generics, exports to over 200 countries and houses more than 600 USFDA-compliant manufacturing sites. *—PTI*

SLIPPING VEHICLE SALES

Nissan slashes 15% of its global workforce

TOKYO, 13 MAY

Nissan is slashing about 15 per cent of its global workforce, or about 20,000 employees, as the Japanese automaker reported a loss for the fiscal year that just ended amid slipping vehicle sales in China and other nations.

Nissan Motor Corp said it will reduce the number of its auto plants to 10 from 17, under what it called its recovery plan to carry out "decisive and bold actions to enhance performance and create a leaner, more resilient business that adapts quickly to market changes."

The Yokohama-based automaker said US President Donald Trump's tariffs on auto imports also hurt its results.

Nissan is aiming to reduce its costs by 250 billion Yen (USD 1.7 billion) during the next fiscal year compared to the fiscal 2024 results that just ended in March.

Nissan is aiming to reduce its costs by USD 1.7 billion during the next fiscal year compared to the fiscal 2024 results that just ended in March
PHOTO: NISSAN.IN

Nissan racked up a loss of 670.9 billion Yen (USD 4.5 billion) for the fiscal year through March, down from a 426.6 billion Yen profit recorded the previous fiscal year.

Restructuring costs also hit its bottom line. Chief Financial Officer Jeremie Papin told reporters the automaker faces serious challenges in achieving a turnaround, but stressed it has enough cash to do so. *—PTI*

JAPAN'S HONDA PROJECTS DENT IN PROFITS DUE TO TRUMP'S TARIFFS

TOKYO, 13 MAY

PHOTO: HONDA.IN

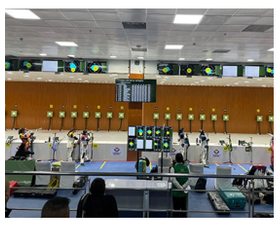
Honda's profit for the fiscal year through March slipped 24.5 per cent from the previous year, as its vehicle sales in China dropped, and the Japanese automaker warned Tuesday that President Donald Trump's tariffs will worsen its earnings.

Tokyo-based Honda Motor Co, which dropped talks to integrate its business with Japanese rival Nissan Motor Corp earlier this year, said its annual profit totaled USD 5.6 billion, down from 1.1 trillion Yen in the previous fiscal year. Annual sales edged up 6.2 per cent to nearly USD 147 billion.

Research and development costs hurt, despite Honda's record global motorcycle sales for the fiscal year, which topped 21 million motorcycles.

Hybrid vehicle sales also did well, especially in the US, and Honda's profitability per vehicle was also improving, according to the maker of the Accord sedan and CR-V sports-utility vehicle.

Officials stressed major uncertainties remain, but said they felt it was important to give a realistic projection, no matter how pessimistic it might be. *—PTI*



Dehradun to host rifle/pistol national selection trials

NEW DELHI, 13 MAY

The Indian shooting federation on Tuesday said the national selection trials 3 and 4 in rifle and pistol events for Group A shooters will be held from 24-30 June in Dehradun. The trials will be conducted at the Trishul Shooting Range. These trials are being held to pick the Indian team for the 16th Asian Shooting Championships 2025 in Kazakhstan in August and the ISSF World Cup in China and Egypt later this year.The country's elite rifle and pistol shooters come into this selection phase following an encouraging run in the double-legged South American ISSF World Cup tour, which marked the beginning of the new international calendar. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Karthikeyan goes down to Daneshvar, Srija beats Bodnaruk

AL AIN , 13 MAY

Indian Grandmaster Murali Karthikeyan went down fighting against Bardiya Daneshvar of Iran, but Srija Sheshadri came back from behind to beat Russia's Anastasia Bodnaruk in the sixth round of the Asian individual chess championships here on Monday. Daneshvar has emerged as the sole leader on 5.5 points after another victory and is the front runner for the gold medal in this USD 80000 prize money championships. It was a Sicilian defense by Karthikeyan as black, and Daneshvar employed the Alapin variation. The opening does not enjoy a great following at top-level chess, but Karthikeyan felt the heat in the middle game as Daneshvar got more active pieces.*—PTI*

PCB considers having a mini replacement

KARACHI, 13 MAY

Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) is considering having a mini replacement draft for the remaining PSL matches as franchises are struggling to ensure availability of overseas players who left the country in the wake of the recent India-Pakistan military conflict. The PCB was planning to relocate the Pakistan Super League (PSL) to the UAE, but suspended it after tension grew at the border. The PCB announced on Tuesday that the league will be completed in the May 17-25 window but did not share the full schedule. *—PTI*

15,000 Argentine fans to be banned from Club WC

DUBAI, 13 MAY

Argentine security minister Patricia Bullrich handed the United States Embassy in Buenos Aires on Monday a list of 15,000 violent football fans who will be banned from stadiums during the upcoming Club World Cup.The newly expanded tournament, to be held on U.S. soil from June 14 to July 13, will feature Argentine clubs Boca Juniors and River Plate, as well as 30 other teams from around the world."The list includes more than 15,000 people who will be banned from stadiums. For us, this is extremely important because no violent person who has committed any crime in Argentine stadiums will be able to attend this sporting event," Bullrich told reporters.The list was compiled through the "Tribuna Segura" programme. *—PTI*

Alcaraz pulls past Karen to enter QF in Rome

Sabalenka battles past Kostyuk to seal quarterfinal spot

ROME, 13 MAY

Carlos Alcaraz found his best level when he needed it most on Tuesday at the Internazionali BNL d'Italia.

The No. 3 in the PIF ATP Rankings delivered an up-and-down fourth-round performance against Karen Khachanov at the ATP Masters 1000 in Rome, but his peaks proved enough to secure a 6-3, 3-6, 7-5 victory. Alcaraz let slip a break lead in both the second and third sets, including four straight games from 6-3, 3-2 up, but recovered in time to maintain his perfect Lexus ATP Head2Head record against Khachanov.

"It feels amazing to get the win at the end against a really big and tough guy like Khachanov," said Alcaraz. "Physically, I struggled a bit. No pain on any part of the body, but I was just tired. The match was tough. "At a break up in the second set, from then to the end of the second set, I probably lost focus a little bit. Now 26-5 for 2025, including a 12-1 record on clay, Alcaraz will take on fifth seed Jack Draper in the semi-finals after the in-form Briton rallied past Corentin Moutet 1-6, 6-4, 6-3. It will be a clash between the first and second-placed players in the PIF ATP Live Race To Turin.

Aryna Sabalenka had to fight to beat Marta Kostyuk 6-1, 7-6 (10/8) in the day's final match, taking just half an hour to win the first set but then being truly tested before sealing a spot in the women's last eight."I'm just thrilled with the performance today, I enjoyed this fight, and super happy to get this win," she said. Kostyuk

engaged Sabalenka in a series of exciting rallies and pushed Sabalenka, with the 20-point game seven of the second set a particular high point of their battle.World number one Sabalenka has reached the final of her last four tournaments, winning in both Miami and Madrid, and is favourite at the Foro Italico following the early elimination of reigning champion Iga Swiatek on Saturday.

Wawrinka receives a wild-card in French Open

Former champion Stan Wawrinka has received a wild card entry for this year's French Open, granting him a spot in the main draw of the Grand Slam at Roland Garros, organisers said on Tuesday. Switzerland's 40-year-old three-time major champion, who has been battling back from a series of injuries, has dropped to 132 in the ATP rankings. He won the title in Paris in 2015. The French Open will be held from 25 May to 8 June. *—PTI*

Bopanna-Pavlasek pair crashes out

India's Rohan Bopanna and his Czech partner Adam Pavlasek bowed out of the men's doubles event at the Rome Masters with a straight-set defeat against the British team of Joe Salisbury and Neal Skupski, here Tuesday. Bopanna and Pavlasek lost the pre-quarterfinal 3-6 3-6 in one hour and eight minutes. With Bopanna's defeat, India's challenge has ended in the elite clay-court tournament. Another Indian in the fray, Yuki Bhambri had exited the ATP 1000 event with American partner Robert Galloway after losing in the opening round 1-6 2-6 to fourth seeds Marcel Granollers of Spain and Argentina's Horacio Zeballos on Sunday.

WTC FINAL

Konstas, Green included in Australia's squad

MELBOURNE, 13 MAY

Flamboyant opener Sam Konstas and fit-again all-rounder Cameron Green found a place in Australia's 15-man squad for next month's World Test Championship final against South Africa in London, where Pat Cummins and his men would be aiming to retain the coveted mace.

There aren't many surprises in the squad, which is more or less the same that competed against India and later Sri Lanka earlier this year.

"The team finished the WTC cycle with an impressive series victory in Sri Lanka following an equally strong summer in defeating India for the first time in a decade," chairman of selectors George Bailey said by 'cricket.com.au'.

"Those series capped a consistent performance across the two-year cycle and now presents us with the incredibly exciting opportunity to defend the World Test Championship (from June 11 to 15 at the Lord's).

"It means a lot to the group to reach the final and they are very much looking forward to the challenge South Africa will present at Lord's," he added. *—PTI*

Sam Konstas

IPL: BCCI ramps up pressure on foreign boards

SYDNEY, 13 MAY

The BCCI and IPL franchises have ramped up pressure on foreign boards to ensure that their players return for the league's resumption on 17 May despite some lingering safety concerns in the wake of India-Pakistan military hostilities.The BCCI top brass has instructed IPL COO Hemang Amin to individually speak to the likes of Cricket Australia (CA) and England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) to allay the concerns that the players may have about returning to India. All 10 teams are involved in a lot of back and forth with their overseas recruits over their arrival plans in India, a day after the IPL announced the revised schedule following necessary security clearances from the government.The world's biggest T20 league was suspended on 9 May due to an India-Pakistan military showdown, triggered by the 22 April terrorist attack in Pahalgam, south Kashmir. *—PTI*

Women's Hockey Team set to play in Argentina

NEW DELHI, 13 MAY

The junior Indian women's hockey team will compete in a four-nation tournament in Argentina from 25 May to kickstart its preparations for the World Cup later this year.

The team will travel to Rosario, where it will play six friendly matches against hosts Argentina, Uruguay, and Chile.

India will open the campaign with a match against Chile on 25 May and will clash with Uruguay the next day. After a rest day, the team will take on Argentina on 28 May.

The team will follow the same sequence in the return leg, taking on Chile on 30 May, Uruguay on 1 June, and Argentina on 2 June. *—PTI*

WIGGINS SAYS HE WAS A COCAINE ADDICT AND IS LUCKY TO BE ALIVE

LONDON, 13 MAY

Former Tour de France champion Bradley Wiggins has revealed he became addicted to cocaine after retiring from cycling.

In an interview with British newspaper The Observer, the five-time Olympic gold medalist said he is "lucky" to be alive.

"There were times my son thought I was going to be found dead in the morning," the 45-year-old Wiggins said. "I was a functioning addict. People wouldn't realize. I was high for most of the time for years."

The British cyclist was a gold medalist in four straight Olympics from 2004 and won the Tour in 2012. He retired in 2016. In 2022, he made an allegation in an interview with Men's Health UK magazine that he was sexually groomed by a coach, whose name he did not reveal, when he was 13 years old.

In a soon-to-be-published autobiography, The Chain, Wiggins detailed how his life spiraled into a cycle of debt and addiction after retirement from the sport.

Wiggins told the Observer his cocaine addiction became a "really bad problem" and he was "walking a tightrope." He quit his addiction a year ago, the newspaper said. *—PTI*

Zara Anand is top Indian after Day 1

MIYAZAKI, 13 MAY

Zara Anand was the top Indian at Tied-12th after the first round of the Queen Sirikit Cup here on Tuesday.

Zara, one of the most promising amateurs in India, shot 1-over 73 with three birdies against four bogeys in the round. Two of those bogeys came on the 14th and the 18th.

The other two Indians in the prestigious competition are Heena Kang (76) at T-21 and Mannat Brar (77), who had an off day and were T-25. Heena had two birdies, four bogeys, and a double bogey, while Mannat had two birdies, five bogeys, and a double bogey. The Indians as a team were lying in seventh place with the two top individual scores giving them a total of 5-over 149. Hosts Japan made an encouraging start in their quest to

Zara Anand

end a home jinx in the Queen Sirikit Cup. They progressed well with three-under-par 69s from Aira Nagasawa and Anna Iwanaga and went into the lead after the opening round of the 45th edition of the Asia-Pacific Amateur Ladies Golf Team Championship.

Diksha stays in Top 10 of LET Order of Merit after Korea C'ships

Indian golfer Diksha Dagar continued to be in the Top-10 of the Ladies European Tour's Order of Merit, despite a tied 52nd place finish at the Aramco Korea Championships here. The 24-year-old, who is now in her sixth year as a professional, finished with a score of six-over 222 at the New Korea Country Club.

Diksha has twice won on the Ladies European Tour and multiple times on her home Tour, the Hero Women's Pro Golf Tour. Barring once in 2020, Diksha has always been in the Top-60 of the LET, with the best two finishes being 14th place in 2019, the year she won her maiden LET title. *—PTI*

FIFA U17 WORLD CUP QATAR 2025

Official emblem launched for 2025 FIFA U17 WC

LONDON, 13 MAY

The FIFA U-17 World Cup, which has previously been a launchpad for icons like Ronaldinho, Xavi, Luis Figo, and Neymar, had the official emblem of its 2025 edition unveiled on Monday.

The tournament, which started in 1985 as a 16-team tournament, has been expanded to 48 teams in 2025, and will take place in Qatar. The U-17 World Cup, which was played as a biennial tournament (except during the pandemic that forced it to happen after four years), will now be played annually, and Qatar will host the next five editions of the tournament, from 2025 to 2029.

FIFA's Secretary General, said "The FIFA U-17 World Cup has proven to be an important stepping stone for the next generation of the world's best young footballers, who display exceptional skill and dedication." *—PTI*

KOHLI, ROHIT'S TEST RETIREMENTS

It's a huge surprise, they deserved send-off: Kumble

NEW DELHI, 13 MAY

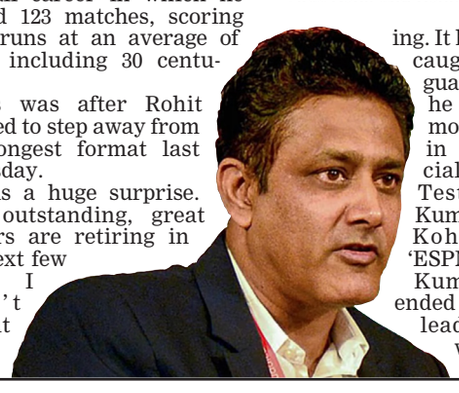
The "quiet" Test retirements of Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma ahead of the tour of England came as a "huge surprise" to legendary spinner and former India captain Anil Kumble, who believes the two senior batters deserved an on-field farewell.

Kohli announced his retirement from Test cricket on Monday, bringing the curtains down on an illustrious red-ball career in which he played 123 matches, scoring 9,230 runs at an average of 46.85, including 30 centuries.

This was after Rohit decided to step away from the longest format last Thursday.

"It is a huge surprise. Two outstanding, great players are retiring in the next few days. I didn't see it coming. It has certainly caught me off guard. I thought he had a few more years left in him, especially at the Test level," Kumble said on Kohli on 'ESPNCricinfo'.

Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma PHOTO: PTI



Kumble, who ended as India's leading Test wicket-taker with 619 scalps, said players of such stature should have been allowed to bow out in front of fans. "It is a very quiet exit. Every player deserves to leave on his own terms, but I think on the field. We spoke about this when R Ashwin retired as well, right in the middle of the series, he announced his retirement and came back (to India from Australia).

"Right now, Rohit Sharma, a few days ago, and then Virat Kohli. I think all three of them deserved a proper send-off on the field. I strongly believe people who matter need to address that. India pacer Mohammed Siraj also paid a glowing tribute to Kohli, his former captain.

Kohli still had a lot of cricket left in him: Kirmani

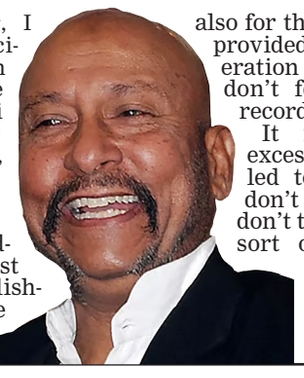
Virat Kohli still had plenty to offer in Test cricket and should have played on longer, reckoned former India wicketkeeper Syed Kirmani, who lauded the star batter's temperament in a glowing tribute. Kohli announced his retirement from Test cricket on Monday, drawing the curtain on a stellar red-ball career.

He represented India in 123 Tests, scoring 9,230 runs at an average of 46.85, including 30 centuries. "He still had a lot of cricket left in him," Kirmani, a member of the 1983 World Cup-winning team, told PTI Videos.

"Everybody has to retire, but he should have played a bit more. However, I respect his decision. I wish him luck for the future." Kohli led India to 40 wins in 68 Tests, the most by any Indian skipper to date.

Kohli and Anuskha listened with rapt attention when Premanand ji emphasised the significance of inner reflection PHOTO: PTI

Kirmani lauded Kohli not just for his accomplishments on the field but also for the inspiration he provided to the next generation of cricketers."I don't feel he is after records.



It might be the excess of cricket that led to this. Records don't matter to him. I don't think he had any sort of pressure on him while making this decision," Kirmani said. *—PTI*